This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

**Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

**About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Harvard College Library

FROM THE BEQUEST OF

JAMES WALKER, D.D., LL.D.

(Class of 1814)

FORMER PRESIDENT OF HARVARD COLLEGE

"Preference being given to works in the Intellectual and Moral Sciences"

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

BOHN'S PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARY

# THE WORKS OF GEORGE BERKELEY
## VOL. II

Digitized by Google

GEORGE BELL & SONS

LONDON: YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN
NEW YORK: 66, FIFTH AVENUE, AND
BOMBAY: 53, ESPLANADE ROAD
CAMBRIDGE: DEIGHTON, BELL & CO.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Smibert pinx. Walker & Boutall, ghse.

The Berkeley Family at Rhode Island.

Digitized by Google

# THE WORKS OF
# GEORGE BERKELEY, D.D.
## BISHOP OF CLOYNE

EDITED BY
GEORGE SAMPSON

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION BY
THE RT. HON. A. J. BALFOUR, M.P.

VOL. II

LONDON
GEORGE BELL AND SONS
1898

Digitized by Google

[illegible] 10.5

HARVARD COLLEGE
JUL 10 1918
LIBRARY
Walker fund

CHISWICK PRESS:—CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON

Digitized by Google

# PREFACE.

IT has been stated that the aim of this edition of Berkeley is to present a complete and accurate text with as little editorial matter as possible. One work, however, contained in this volume seemed to require special treatment. In "Alciphron" Berkeley has exhibited all the phases of contemporary religious criticism in the persons of the two infidel interlocutors; and thus allusions to well-known books and characters of the time are full and frequent. The editor has endeavoured to explain the allusions as briefly as possible, by an introductory note where the *motif* of any dialogue is drawn chiefly from particular works or persons; or by references in footnotes where the allusions are more casual. Were the books or persons referred to directly, this would be unnecessary; and the editor begs those who may think his notes too many or too much to consider that without some explanation certain paragraphs—such, for instance, as the third section of the fifth dialogue—must seem rather forcibly dragged in. It must be said, however, that the occasional obscurity of allusion does not in any way lessen the charm of a most engaging work; though a deeper study can only fill one with admiration of the consummate art which could combine materials

Digitized by Google

so dull and so intractable into a work so brilliant and so elegant.

Attention may be drawn to the fact that the text of Berkeley's final edition of "Alciphron" (1752) is reprinted here completely for the first time in an English edition. Professor Fraser mentions many of the peculiarities of that text in an appendix to his edition (1871); but a fair number of alterations were unremarked.

The editor wishes to thank Mr. Strickland, of the Dublin National Gallery, for calling his attention to a replica there of Smibert's portrait (now at Yale) of the Rhode Island family group, and for his assistance in its reproduction here. The picture has been engraved by Messrs. Walker and Boutall, to whom thanks are also due.

Digitized by Google

# CONTENTS.

## VOL. II.


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| ESSAYS IN THE "GUARDIAN" . . . . . | 1 |
| CONCERNING MOTION . . . . . | 55 |
| ESSAY TOWARDS PREVENTING THE RUIN OF GREAT BRITAIN . . . . . | 81 |
| PROPOSAL FOR SUPPLYING CHURCHES IN FOREIGN PLANTATIONS . . . . . | 103 |
| VERSES . . . . . | 125 |
| A SERMON . . . . . | 127 |
| ALCIPHRON, OR THE MINUTE PHILOSOPHER . . | 147 |
| THEORY OF VISION VINDICATED AND EXPLAINED | 481 |


Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

# ESSAYS IN THE "GUARDIAN."

1713.



Digitized by Google

[BERKELEY had crossed to England early in 1713 to publish his "Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous" (see vol. i. of this edition). The brilliant literary society of that time welcomed him with enthusiasm, and was captivated by his exquisite charm of manner. Steele, his impulsive compatriot, seems to have shown him especial regard, and we presently hear of Berkeley contributing to the "Guardian," Steele's "new paper." No essays can be assigned to Berkeley with any certainty; but all except one of the following are described as his in the various editions of the "Guardian." No. 3 is usually attributed to "Steele or Berkeley;" and, though No. 69 is often ascribed to Steele, yet a writer in the "Gent. Mag." (1780) positively assigns it to Berkeley. The matter of the papers is such as might well have come from Berkeley; and we find therein the raw stuff of much of "Alciphron."]

Digitized by Google

NUMB. III.

# The GUARDIAN.

"Quicquid est illud quod sentit, quod sapit, quod vult, quod viget, cœleste et divinum est, ob eamque rem, æternum sic necesse est."—CICERO.

Whatever that be which thinks, which understands, which wills, which acts, it is something celestial and divine, and, upon that account, must necessarily be eternal.

*Saturday, March* 14, 1713.

I AM diverted from the account I was giving the town of my particular concerns, by casting my eye upon a Treatise which I could not overlook without an inexcusable negligence, and want of concern for all the civil as well as religious interests of mankind. This piece has for its title, "A Discourse of Free-thinking, occasioned by the Rise and Growth of a Sect called Free-thinkers."[1] The author very methodically enters upon his argument, and says, "By *free-thinking* I mean the use of the understanding in endeavouring to find out the meaning of any proposition whatsoever, in considering the nature of the evidence for or against, and in judging of it according to the seeming force or weakness of the evidence." As soon as he has delivered this definition, from which one would expect he did not design to shew a particular inclination for or against any thing before he had considered it, he gives up all title to the character of a Free-thinker, with the most apparent prejudice against a body of men whom of all other a good man would be most careful not to violate, I mean men in holy orders. Persons who have devoted themselves to the service of God are venerable to all who fear

[1] By Anthony Collins. See also "Alciphron."—ED.

Digitized by Google

Him; and it is a certain characteristic of a dissolute and ungoverned mind, to rail or speak disrespectfully of them in general. It is certain that in so great a crowd of men some will intrude who are of tempers very unbecoming their function; but because ambition and avarice are sometimes lodged in that bosom which ought to be the dwelling of sanctity and devotion, must this unreasonable author vilify the whole order? He has not taken the least care to disguise his being an enemy to the persons against whom he writes, nor any where granted that the institution of religious men to serve at the altar, and instruct such who are not as wise as himself, is at all necessary or desirable; but proceeds, without the least apology, to undermine their credit, and frustrate their labours. Whatever clergymen, in disputes against each other, have unguardedly uttered is here recorded in such a manner as to affect religion itself, by wresting concessions to its disadvantage from its own teachers. If this be true, as sure any man that reads the "Discourse" must allow it is, and if religion is the strongest tie of human society, in what manner are we to treat this our common enemy, who promotes the growth of such a sect as he calls Free-thinkers? He that should burn a house, and justify the action by asserting he is a free agent, would be more excusable than this author in uttering what he has from the right of a Free-thinker. But there are a set of dry, joyless, dull fellows, who want capacities and talents to make a figure amongst mankind upon benevolent and generous principles, that think to surmount their own natural meanness, by laying offences in the way of such as make it their endeavour to excel upon the received maxims and honest arts of life. If it were possible to laugh at so melancholy an affair as what hazards salvation, it would be no unpleasant inquiry to ask what satisfactions they reap, what extraordinary gratification of sense, or what delicious libertinism this sect of Free-thinkers enjoy, after getting loose of the laws which confine the passions of other men? Would it not be a matter of mirth to find, after all, that the heads of this growing sect are sober wretches, who prate whole evenings over coffee, and have not themselves fire enough to be any further debauchees than merely in principle? These sages of iniquity are, it seems, themselves only speculatively wicked, and are con-

Digitized by Google

tented that all the abandoned young men of the age are kept safe from reflexion by dabbling in their rhapsodies, without tasting the pleasures for which their doctrines leave them unaccountable. Thus do heavy mortals, only to gratify a dry pride of heart, give up the interests of another world, without enlarging their gratifications in this; but it is certain there are a sort of men that can puzzle truth, but cannot enjoy the satisfaction of it. This same Free-thinker is a creature unacquainted with the emotions which possess great minds when they are turned for religion, and it is apparent that he is untouched with any such sensation as the rapture of devotion. Whatever one of these scorners may think, they certainly want parts to be devout; and a sense of piety towards heaven, as well as the sense of any thing else, is lively and warm in proportion to the faculties of the head and heart. This gentleman may be assured he has not a taste for what he pretends to decry, and the poor man is certainly more a blockhead than an atheist. I must repeat that he wants capacity to relish what true piety is; and he is as capable of writing an heroic poem as making a fervent prayer. When men are thus low and narrow in their apprehensions of things, and at the same time vain, they are naturally led to think everything they do not understand not to be understood. Their contradiction to what is urged by others is a necessary consequence of their incapacity to receive it. The atheistical fellows who appeared the last age did not serve the devil for nought, but revelled in excesses suitable to their principles; while in these unhappy days mischief is done for mischief's sake. These Free-thinkers, who lead the lives of recluse students for no other purpose but to disturb the sentiments of other men, put me in mind of the monstrous recreation of those late wild youths, who, without provocation, had a wantonness in stabbing and defacing those they met with. When such writers as this, who has no spirit but that of malice, pretend to inform the age, "Mohocks" and cut-throats may well set up for wits and men of pleasure.

It will be perhaps expected, that I should produce some instances of the ill intention of this Free-thinker, to support the treatment I here give him. In his 52nd page he says:

Digitized by Google

"2ndly. The priests throughout the world differ about scriptures, and the authority of scriptures. The Bramins have a book of scripture called the Shaster. The Persees have their Zundavastaw. The Bonzes of China have books written by the disciples of Fo-he, whom they call the 'God and Saviour of the world, who was born to teach the way of salvation, and to give satisfaction for all men's sins.' The Talapoins of Siam have a book of scripture written by Sommonocodom, who, the Siamese say, was 'born of a virgin,' and was 'the God expected by the universe.' The Dervizes have their Alcoran."

I believe there is no one will dispute the author's great impartiality in setting down the accounts of these different religions. And I think it is pretty evident he delivers the matter with an air which betrays that the history of "one born of a virgin" has as much authority with him from St. Sommonocodom as from St. Matthew. Thus he treats revelation. Then, as to philosophy, he tells you, p. 136, Cicero produces this as an instance of a probable opinion,—"that they who study philosophy do not believe there are any Gods;" and then, from consideration of various notions, he affirms Tully concludes, "that there can be nothing after death."

As to what he misrepresents of Tully, the short sentence on the head of this paper is enough to oppose; but who can have patience to reflect upon the assemblage of impostures among which our author places the religion of his country? As for my part, I cannot see any possible interpretation to give this work, but a design to subvert and ridicule the authority of Scripture. The peace and tranquillity of the nation, and regards even above those, are so much concerned in this matter that it is difficult to express sufficient sorrow for the offender, or indignation against him. But if ever man deserved to be denied the common benefits of air and water, it is the author of "A Discourse of Free-thinking."

Digitized by Google

NUMB. XXVII.

# The GUARDIAN.

"Multa putans, sortemque animo miseratus iniquam."
VIRG. *Æn.* 6, v. 332.

Struck with compassion of so sad a state.

*Saturday, April* 11, 1713.

IN compassion to those gloomy mortals who by their unbelief are rendered incapable of feeling those impressions of joy and hope which the celebration of the late glorious festival naturally leaves on the mind of a Christian, I shall in this paper endeavour to evince that there are grounds to expect a Future State, without supposing in the reader any faith at all, not even the belief of a Deity. Let the most stedfast unbeliever open his eyes, and take a survey of the sensible world, and then say if there be not a connexion, an adjustment, an exact and constant order discoverable in all the parts of it. Whatever be the cause, the thing itself is evident to all our faculties. Look into the animal system, the passions, senses, and locomotive powers; is not the like contrivance and propriety observable in these too? Are they not fitted to certain ends, and are they not by nature directed to proper objects?

Is it possible then that the smallest bodies should, by a management superior to the wit of man, be disposed in the most excellent manner agreeable to their respective natures; and yet the spirits or souls of men be neglected, or managed by such rules as fall short of man's understanding? Shall every other passion be rightly placed by nature, and shall that appetite of Immortality, natural to all mankind, be alone misplaced, or designed to be frustrated? Shall the industrious application of the inferior animal powers in the meanest vocations be answered by the ends we propose, and shall not the generous efforts of a virtuous mind be rewarded? In a word, shall the corporeal world be all order and harmony,

Digitized by Google

the intellectual discord and confusion? He who is bigot enough to believe these things must bid adieu to that natural rule of "reasoning from analogy;" must run counter to that maxim of common sense, "That men ought to form their judgments of things unexperienced from what they have experienced."

If any thing looks like a recompence of calamitous virtue on this side the grave, it is either an assurance that thereby we obtain the favour and protection of heaven, and shall, whatever befals us in this, in another life meet with a just return; or else that applause and reputation which is thought to attend virtuous actions. The former of these, our free-thinkers, out of their singular wisdom and benevolence to mankind, endeavour to erase from the minds of men. The latter can never be justly distributed in this life, where so many ill actions are reputable, and so many good actions disesteemed or misinterpreted; where subtle hypocrisy is placed in the most engaging light, and modest virtue lies concealed; where the heart and the soul are hid from the eyes of men, and the eyes of men are dimmed and vitiated. Plato's sense in relation to this point is contained in his Gorgias, where he introduces Socrates speaking after this manner:—

"It was in the reign of Saturn provided by a law, which the gods have since continued down to this time, That they who had lived virtuously and piously upon earth, should after death enjoy a life full of happiness, in certain islands appointed for the habitation of the blessed: but that such as have lived wickedly should go into the receptacle of damned souls, named Tartarus, there to suffer the punishments they deserved. But in all the reign of Saturn, and in the beginning of the reign of Jove, living judges were appointed, by whom each person was judged in his life-time in the same day on which he was to die. The consequence of which was, that they often passed wrong judgments. Pluto, therefore, who presided in Tartarus, and the guardians of the blessed islands, finding that on the other side many unfit persons were sent to their respective dominions, complained to Jove, who promised to redress the evil. He added, the reason of these unjust proceedings are that men are judged in the body. Hence many conceal the blemishes

Digitized by Google

and imperfections of their minds by beauty, birth and riches; not to mention that at the time of trial there are crowds of witnesses to attest their having lived well. These things mislead the judges, who being themselves also of the number of the living, are surrounded each with his own body, as with a veil thrown over his mind. For the future, therefore, it is my intention that men do not come on their trial till after death, when they shall appear before the judge, disrobed of all their corporeal ornaments. The judge himself too shall be a pure unveiled spirit, beholding the very soul, the naked soul of the party before him. With this view I have already constituted my sons, Minos and Rhadamanthus, judges, who are natives of Asia; and Æachus, a native of Europe. These, after death, shall hold their court in a certain meadow, from which there are two roads, leading the one to Tartarus, the other to the islands of 'the blessed.'"

From this, as from numberless other passages of his writings, may be seen Plato's opinion of a Future State. A thing therefore in regard to us so comfortable, in itself so just and excellent, a thing so agreeable to the analogy of nature, and so universally credited by all orders and ranks of men, of all nations and ages, what is it that should move a few men to reject? Surely there must be something of prejudice in the case. I appeal to the secret thoughts of a Free-thinker, if he does not argue within himself after this manner: The senses and faculties I enjoy at present are visibly designed to repair or preserve the body from the injuries it is liable to in its present circumstances: but in an eternal state, where no decays are to be repaired, no outward injuries to be fenced against, where there are no flesh and bones, nerves or blood-vessels, there will certainly be none of the senses: and that there should be a state of life without the senses is inconceivable.

But as this manner of reasoning proceeds from a poverty of imagination and narrowness of soul in those that use it, I shall endeavour to remedy those defects, and open their views, by laying before them a case which, being naturally possible, may perhaps reconcile them to the belief of what is supernaturally revealed.

Let us suppose a person blind and deaf from his birth,

Digitized by Google

who, being grown to man's estate, is, by the dead palsy or some other cause, deprived of his feeling, tasting, and smelling, and at the same time has the impediment of his hearing removed, and the film taken from his eyes. What the five senses are to us, that the touch, taste and smell were to him. And any other ways of perception, of a more refined and extensive nature, were to him as inconceivable as to us those are which will one day be adapted to perceive those things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." And it would be just as reasonable in him to conclude, that the loss of those three senses could not possibly be succeeded by any new inlets of perception, as in a modern Free-thinker to imagine there can be no state of life and perception without the senses he enjoys at present. Let us further suppose the same person's eyes, at their first opening, to be struck with a great variety of the most gay and pleasing objects, and his ears with a melodious consort of vocal and instrumental music. Behold him amazed, ravished, transported; and you have some distant representation, some faint and glimmering idea of the ecstatic state of the soul in that article in which she emerges from this sepulchre of flesh into Life and Immortality.

N.B. It has been observed by the Christians, that a certain ingenious foreigner,[1] who has published many exemplary jests for the use of persons in the article of death was very much out of humour in a late fit of sickness, till he was in a fair way of recovery.

[1] M. Boureau Deslandes, described by his English publisher as "one of the Ambassador's retinue." The work referred to is a translation of his "Reflexions sur les grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant" (1713). See further "Guardian," No. 39.—ED.

Digitized by Google

NUMB. XXXV.

# The GUARDIAN.

"O vitæ philosophia dux, virtutis indagatrix!"—CICERO.

O philosophy, thou guide of life, and discoverer of virtue!

*Tuesday, April* 21, 1713.

## To NESTOR IRONSIDE, ESQ.

"SIR,

"I am a man who have spent great part of that time in rambling through foreign countries which young gentlemen usually pass at the university; by which course of life, although I have acquired no small insight into the manners and conversation of men, yet I could not make proportionable advances in the way of science and speculation. In my return through France, as I was one day setting forth this my case to a certain gentleman of that nation with whom I had contracted a friendship, after some pause he conducted me into his closet, and, opening a little amber cabinet, took from thence a small box of Snuff, which he said was given him by an uncle of his, the author of 'The Voyage to the World of Descartes;' and, with many professions of gratitude and affection, made me a present of it—telling me at the same time, that he knew no readier way to furnish and adorn a mind with knowledge in the arts and sciences than that same Snuff rightly applied.

"You must know, said he, that Descartes was the first who discovered a certain part of the brain, called by anatomists the Pineal Gland, to be the immediate receptacle of the soul, where she is affected with all sorts of perceptions, and exerts all her operations by the intercourse of the animal spirits which run through the nerves that are thence extended to all parts of the body. He added, that the same philosopher having considered the body as a machine or piece of clockwork, which performed all the vital operations without

Digitized by Google

the concurrence of the will, began to think a way may be found out for separating the soul for some time from the body, without any injury to the latter; and that, after much meditation on that subject, the above-mentioned virtuoso composed the Snuff he then gave me; which, if taken in a certain quantity, would not fail to disengage my soul from my body. Your soul (continued he) being at liberty to transport herself with a thought wherever she pleases, may enter into the Pineal Gland of the most learned philosopher; and, being so placed, become spectator of all the ideas in his mind, which would instruct her in a much less time than the usual methods. I returned him thanks, and accepted his present, and with it a paper of directions.

"You may imagine it was no small improvement and diversion to pass my time in the Pineal Glands of philosophers, poets, beaux, mathematicians, ladies, and statesmen. One while, to trace a theorem in mathematics through a long labyrinth of intricate turns and subtleties of thought; another, to be conscious of the sublime ideas and comprehensive views of a philosopher, without any fatigue or wasting of my own spirits. Sometimes, to wander through perfumed groves, or enamelled meadows, in the fancy of a poet: at others, to be present when a battle or a storm raged, or a glittering palace rose in his imagination; or to behold the pleasures of a country life, the passion of a generous love, or the warmth of devotion wrought up to rapture. Or (to use the words of a very ingenious author) to

> 'Behold the raptures which a writer knows,
> When in his breast a vein of fancy glows,
> Behold his business while he works the mine.
> Behold his temper when he sees it shine.'
> *Essay on the Different Styles of Poetry.*

"These gave me inconceivable pleasure. Nor was it an unpleasant entertainment sometimes to descend from these sublime and magnificent ideas to the impertinences of a beau, the dry schemes of a coffee-house politician, or the tender images in the mind of a young lady. And as, in order to frame a right idea of human happiness, I thought it expedient to make a trial of the various manners wherein men of different pursuits were affected; I one day entered

Digitized by Google

into the Pineal Gland of a certain person who seemed very fit to give me an insight into all that which constitutes the happiness of him who is called 'a man of pleasure.' But I found myself not a little disappointed in my notion of the pleasures which attend a voluptuary, who has shaken off the restraints of reason.

"His intellectuals, I observed, were grown unserviceable by too little use, and his senses were decayed and worn out by too much. That perfect inaction of the higher powers prevented appetite in prompting him to sensual gratifications; and the outrunning natural appetite produced a loathing instead of a pleasure. I there beheld the intemperate cravings of youth, without the enjoyments of it; and the weakness of old age, without its tranquillity. When the passions were teazed and roused by some powerful object, the effect was, not to delight or soothe the mind, but to torture it between the returning extremes of appetite and satiety. I saw a wretch racked, at the same time, with a painful remembrance of past miscarriages, a distaste of the present objects that solicit his senses, and a secret dread of futurity. And I could see no manner of relief or comfort in the soul of this miserable man, but what consisted in preventing his cure, by inflaming his passions and suppressing his reason. But, though it must be owned he had almost quenched that light which his Creator had set up in his soul, yet in spite of all his efforts, I observed at certain seasons frequent flashes of remorse strike through the gloom, and interrupt that satisfaction he enjoyed in hiding his own deformities from himself.

"I was alsó present at the original formation or production of a certain book in the mind of a Free-thinker, and believing it may be not unacceptable to let you into the secret manner and internal principles by which that *phænomenon* was formed, I shall in my next give you an account of it. I am, in the mean time,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"ULYSSES COSMOPOLITA."

"N.B. Mr. Ironside has lately received out of France ten pound avoirdupois weight of this philosophical Snuff, and

Digitized by Google

gives notice that he will make use of it, in order to distinguish the real from the professed sentiments of all persons of eminence in court, city, town, and country."

NUMB. XXXIX.

# The GUARDIAN.

"———— Ægri somnia."—HOR. *Ars Poet.* v. 7.

A sick man's dreams.

*Saturday, April* 25, 1713.

MY correspondent, who has acquired the faculty of entering into other men's thoughts, having, in pursuance to a former letter, sent me an account of certain useful discoveries he has made by the help of that invention, I shall communicate the same to the public in this paper.

"MR. IRONSIDE,

"On the 11th day of October, in the year 1712, having left my body locked up safe in my study, I repaired to the Grecian coffee-house, where, entering into the Pineal Gland of a certain eminent Free-thinker, I made directly to the highest part of it, which is the seat of the Understanding, expecting to find there a comprehensive knowledge of all things human and divine; but, to my no small astonishment, I found the place narrower than ordinary, insomuch that there was not any room for a miracle, prophecy, or separate spirit.

"This obliged me to descend a story lower, into the Imagination, which I found larger, indeed, but cold and comfortless. I discovered Prejudice in the figure of a woman standing in a corner, with her eyes close shut, and her fore-fingers stuck in her ears; many words in a confused order, but spoken with great emphasis, issued from her mouth. These being condensed by the coldness of the place, formed a sort of mist, through which methought I saw a great castle

Digitized by Google

with a fortification cast round it, and a tower adjoining to it that through the windows appeared to be filled with racks and halters. Beneath the castle I could discern vast dungeons, and all about it lay scattered the bones of men. It seemed to be garrisoned by certain men in black, of gigantic size, and most terrible forms. But, as I drew near, the terror of the appearance vanished; and the castle I found to be only a church, whose steeple with its clock and bell ropes was mistaken for a tower filled with racks and halters. The terrible Giants in black shrunk into a few innocent clergymen. The dungeons were turned into vaults designed only for the habitation of the dead; and the fortifications proved to be a churchyard, with some scattered bones in it, and a plain stone wall round it.

"I had not been long here before my curiosity was raised by a loud noise that I heard in the inferior region. Descending thither I found a mob of the Passions assembled in a riotous manner. Their tumultuary proceedings soon convinced me, that they affected a democracy. After much noise and wrangle, they at length all hearkened to Vanity, who proposed the raising of a great army of notions, which she offered to lead against those dreadful phantoms in the imagination that had occasioned all this uproar.

"Away posted Vanity, and I after her, to the storehouse of ideas; where I beheld a great number of lifeless notions confusedly thrown together, but upon the approach of Vanity they began to crawl. Here were to be seen, among other odd things, sleeping deities, corporeal spirits, and worlds formed by chance; with an endless variety of heathen notions, the most irregular and grotesque imaginable. And with these were jumbled several of Christian extraction; but such was the dress and light they were put in, and their features were so distorted, that they looked little better than heathens. There was likewise assembled no small number of phantoms in strange habits, who proved to be idolatrous priests of different nations. Vanity gave the word, and straightway the Talapoins, Faquirs, Bramines and Bonzes drew up in a body. The right wing consisted of ancient heathen notions, and the left of Christians naturalized. All these together, for numbers, composed a very formidable army; but the precipitation of Vanity was so great, and such was their own inbred

Digitized by Google

aversion to the tyranny of rules and discipline, that they seemed rather a confused rabble than a regular army. I could, nevertheless, observe, that they all agreed in a squinting look, or cast of their eyes towards a certain person in a mask, who was placed in the centre, and whom by sure signs and tokens I discovered to be Atheism.

"Vanity had no sooner led her forces into the Imagination, but she resolved upon storming the castle, and giving no quarter. They began the assault with a loud outcry and great confusion. I, for my part, made the best of my way and re-entered my own lodging. Some time after, inquiring at a bookseller's for 'A Discourse on Free-thinking,' which had made some noise, I met with the representatives of all those notions drawn up in the same confused order upon paper. Sage Nestor, I am

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"ULYSSES COSMOPOLITA."

"N. B. I went round the table, but could not find a wit or mathematician among them."

I imagine the account here given may be useful in directing to the proper cure of a Free-thinker. In the first place, it is plain his Understanding wants to be opened and enlarged, and he should be taught the way to order and methodise his ideas; to which end the study of the mathematics may be useful. I am farther of opinion, that as his Imagination is filled with amusements, arising from prejudice, and the obscure or false lights in which he sees things, it will be necessary to bring him into good company, and now and then carry him to church; by which means he may in time come to a right sense of religion, and wear off the ill impressions he has received. Lastly, I advise whoever undertakes the reformation of a modern Free-thinker, that above all things he be careful to subdue his Vanity; that being the principal motive which prompts a little genius to distinguish itself by singularities that are hurtful to mankind.

Or, if the passion of Vanity, as it is for the most part very strong in your Free-thinkers, cannot be subdued, let it be won over to the interest of religion, by giving them to under-

Digitized by Google

stand that the greatest *Genii* of the age have a respect for things sacred; that their rhapsodies find no admirers, and that the name Free-thinker has, like Tyrant of old, degenerated from its original signification, and is now supposed to denote something contrary to wit and reason. In fine, let them know that whatever temptations a few men of parts might formerly have had, from the novelty of the thing, to oppose the received opinions of Christians, yet that now the humour is worn out, and blasphemy and irreligion are distinctions which have long since descended down to lackeys and drawers.

But it must be my business to prevent all pretenders in this kind from hurting the ignorant and unwary. In order to this, I communicated an intelligence which I received of a gentleman's appearing very sorry that he was not well during a late fit of sickness, contrary to his own doctrine, which obliged him to be merry upon that occasion, except he was sure of recovering. Upon this advice to the world, the following advertisement got a place in the "Post-boy:"

"WHEREAS in the paper called the 'Guardian,' of Saturday the 11th of April instant, a corollary reflection was made on Monsieur D———, a member of the royal academy of sciences in Paris, author of a book lately published, entitled:

"'A Philological Essay, or Reflexions on the death of Free-thinkers, with the characters of the most eminent persons of both sexes, ancient and modern, that died pleasantly and unconcerned, &c.;' sold by J. Baker in Pater-noster-Row—suggesting as if that gentleman, now in London, 'was very much out of humour, in a late fit of sickness, till he was in a fair way of recovery:' this is to assure the public, that the said gentleman never expressed the least concern at the approach of death, but expected the fatal minute with a most heroical and philosophical resignation; of which a copy of verses he wrote, in the serene intervals of his distemper, is an invincible proof."

All that I contend for is, that this gentleman was out of humour when he was sick; and the advertiser, to confute me, says, that "in the serene intervals of his distemper," that is,



Digitized by Google

when he was not sick, he wrote verses. I shall not retract my advertisement till I see those verses, and I will choose what to believe then, except they are underwritten by his nurse, nor then neither, except she is an house-keeper. I must tie this gentleman close to the argument; for, if he had not actually his fit upon him, there is nothing courageous in the thing, nor does it make for his purpose, nor are they heroic verses.

The point of being merry at the hour of death is a matter that ought to be settled by divines; but the publisher of the "Philological Essay" produces his chief authorities from Lucretius, the earl of Rochester, and Mr. John Dryden, who were gentlemen that did not think themselves obliged to prove all they said, or else proved their assertions, by saying or swearing they were all fools that believed to the contrary. If it be absolutely necessary that a man should be facetious at his death, it would be very well if these gentlemen, Monsieur D—— and Mr. B——, would repent betimes, and not trust to a death-bed ingenuity; by what has appeared hitherto, they have only raised our longing to see their posthumous works.

The author of "Poetæ Rusticantis Literatum Otium" is but a mere phraseologist; the philological publisher is but a translator; but I expected better usage from Mr. Abel Roper who is an original.[1]

[1] The "Poetæ Rusticantis Literatum Otium" was a slim volume of Latin poems by Mons. Deslandes, also published in this year. The "philological publisher" refers to Abel Boyer, translator and lexicographer. Abel Roper, "Toby's Uncle," was the publisher of the "Post-Boy," and notorious later in connexion with the attacks on Steele.—ED.

Digitized by Google

NUMB. XLIX.

# The GUARDIAN.

"—— quæ possit facere et servare beatum."
HOR. *Ep.* 6, l. 1, v. 2.

"To make men happy, and to keep them so."—CREECH.

*Thursday, May* 7, 1713.

IT is of great use to consider the Pleasures which constitute human happiness, as they are distinguished into natural and fantastical. Natural pleasures I call those, which, not depending on the fashion and caprice of any particular age or nation, are suited to human nature in general, and were intended by Providence as rewards for the using our faculties agreeably to the ends for which they were given us. Fantastical pleasures are those which, having no natural fitness to delight our minds, presuppose some particular whim or taste accidentally prevailing in a set of people, to which it is owing that they please.

Now, I take it that the tranquillity and cheerfulness with which I have passed my life are the effect of having, ever since I came to years of discretion, continued my inclinations to the former sort of pleasures. But, as my experience can be a rule only to my own actions, it may probably be a stronger motive to induce others to the same scheme of life, if they would consider that we are prompted to natural pleasures by an instinct impressed on our minds by the Author of our nature, who best understands our frames, and consequently best knows what those pleasures are, which will give us the least uneasiness in the pursuit, and the greatest satisfaction in the enjoyment of them. Hence it follows that the objects of our natural desires are cheap or easy to be obtained; it being a maxim that holds throughout the whole system of created beings, "that, nothing is made in vain," much less the instincts and appetites of animals, which the benevolence as well as wisdom of the Deity is concerned to provide for. Nor is the fruition of those objects less pleasing

Digitized by Google

than the acquisition is easy; and the pleasure is heightened by the sense of having answered some natural end, and the consciousness of acting in concert with the Supreme Governor of the universe.

Under natural pleasures I comprehend those which are universally suited as well to the rational as the sensual part of our nature. And, of the pleasures which affect our senses, those only are to be esteemed natural that are contained within the rules of reason, which is allowed to be as necessary an ingredient of human nature as sense. And, indeed, excesses of any kind are hardly to be esteemed pleasures, much less natural pleasures.

It is evident that a desire terminated in money is fantastical; so is the desire of outward distinctions, which bring no delight of sense, nor recommend us as useful to mankind; and the desire of things merely because they are new or foreign. Men who are indisposed to a due exertion of their higher parts are driven to such pursuits as these from the restlessness of the mind, and the sensitive appetites being easily satisfied. It is, in some sort, owing to the bounty of Providence that, disdaining a cheap and vulgar happiness, they frame to themselves imaginary goods, in which there is nothing can raise desire, but the difficulty of obtaining them. Thus men become the contrivers of their own misery; as a punishment on themselves for departing from the measures of nature. Having by an habitual reflexion on these truths made them familiar, the effect is, that I, among a number of persons who have debauched their natural taste, see things in a peculiar light; which I have arrived at, not by any uncommon force of genius or acquired knowledge, but only by unlearning the false notions instilled by custom and education.

The various objects that compose the world were by nature formed to delight our senses: and as it is this alone that makes them desirable to an uncorrupted taste, a man may be said naturally to possess them, when he possesseth those enjoyments which they are fitted by nature to yield. Hence it is usual with me to consider myself as having a natural property in every object that administers pleasure to me. When I am in the country, all the fine seats near the place of my residence, and to which I have access, I regard as mine. The same I think of the groves and fields where I

Digitized by Google

walk, and muse on the folly of the civil landlord in London, who has the fantastical pleasure of draining dry rent into his coffers, but is a stranger to fresh air and rural enjoyments. By these principles I am possessed of half a dozen of the finest seats in England, which in the eye of the law belong to certain of my acquaintance, who being men of business choose to live near the court.

In some great families, where I choose to pass my time, a stranger would be apt to rank me with the other domestics; but, in my own thoughts and natural judgment, I am master of the house, and he who goes by that name is my steward, who eases me of the care of providing for myself the conveniences and pleasures of life.

When I walk the streets, I use the foregoing natural maxim (viz. That he is the true possessor of a thing who enjoys it, and not he that owns it without the enjoyment of it) to convince myself that I have a property in the gay part of all the gilt chariots that I meet, which I regard as amusements designed to delight my eyes, and the imagination of those kind people who sit in them gaily attired only to please me. I have a real, and they only an imaginary pleasure from their exterior embellishments. Upon the same principle, I have discovered that I am the natural proprietor of all the diamond necklaces, the crosses, stars, brocades, and embroidered clothes which I see at a play or birth-night, as giving more natural delight to the spectator than to those that wear them. And I look on the beaus and ladies as so many paraquets in an aviary, or tulips in a garden, designed purely for my diversion. A gallery of pictures, a cabinet or library that I have free access to, I think my own. In a word, all that I desire is the use of things, let who will have the keeping of them. By which maxim I am grown one of the richest men in Great Britain; with this difference, that I am not a prey to my own cares, or the envy of others.

The same principles I find of great use in my private economy. As I cannot go to the price of history-painting, I have purchased at easy rates several beautifully designed pieces of landscape and perspective, which are much more pleasing to a natural taste than unknown faces or Dutch gambols, though done by the best masters: my couches, beds, and window-curtains are of Irish stuff, which those of

Digitized by Google

that nation work very fine, and with a delightful mixture of colours. There is not a piece of china in my house; but I have glasses of all sorts, and some tinged with the finest colours, which are not the less pleasing, because they are domestic, and cheaper than foreign toys. Every thing is neat, entire, and clean, and fitted to the taste of one who had rather be happy than be thought rich.

Every day, numberless innocent and natural gratifications occur to me, while I behold my fellow creatures labouring in a toilsome and absurd pursuit of trifles; one, that he may be called by a particular appellation; another, that he may wear a particular ornament, which I regard as a bit of ribband that has an agreeable effect on my sight, but is so far from supplying the place of merit where it is not, that it serves only to make the want of it more conspicuous. Fair weather is the joy of my soul; about noon I behold a blue sky with rapture, and receive great consolation from the rosy dashes of light which adorn the clouds of the morning and evening. When I am lost among green trees, I do not envy a great man with a great crowd at his levee. And I often lay aside thoughts of going to an opera that I may enjoy the silent pleasure of walking by moonlight, or viewing the stars sparkle in their azure ground; which I look upon as part of my possessions, not without a secret indignation at the tastelessness of mortal men who, in their race through life, overlook the real enjoyments of it.

But the pleasure which naturally affects a human mind with the most lively and transporting touches, I take to be the sense that we act in the eye of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, that will crown our virtuous endeavours here with a happiness hereafter, large as our desires, and lasting as our immortal souls. This is a perpetual spring of gladness in the mind. This lessens our calamities, and doubles our joys. Without this the highest state of life is insipid, and with it the lowest is a paradise. What unnatural wretches then are those who can be so stupid as to imagine a merit, in endeavouring to rob virtue of her support, and a man of his present as well as future bliss? But as I have frequently taken occasion to animadvert on that species of mortals, so I propose to repeat my animadversions on them, till I see some symptoms of amendment.

Digitized by Google

NUMB. LV.

# The GUARDIAN.

"——— quis enim virtutem amplectitur ipsam,
Præmia si tollas?———" JUV. *Sat.* 10, v. 141.

"For who would virtue for herself regard,
Or wed, without the portion of reward?"—DRYDEN.

*Thursday, May* 14, 1713.

IT is usual with polemical writers to object ill designs to their adversaries. This turns their argument into satire, which, instead of shewing an error in the understanding, tends only to expose the morals of those they write against. I shall not act after this manner with respect to the Free-thinkers. Virtue, and the happiness of society are the great ends which all men ought to promote, and some of that sect would be thought to have at heart above the rest of mankind. But, supposing those who make that profession to carry on a good design in the simplicity of their hearts, and according to their best knowledge, yet it is much to be feared, those well-meaning souls, while they endeavoured to recommend virtue, have in reality been advancing the interests of vice, which as I take to proceed from their ignorance of human nature, we may hope, when they become sensible of their mistake, they will, in consequence of that beneficent principle they pretend to act upon, reform their practice for the future.

The sages whom I have in my eye speak of virtue as the most amiable thing in the world; but, at the same time that they extol her beauty, they take care to lessen her portion. Such innocent creatures are they, and so great strangers to the world, that they think this a likely method to increase the number of her admirers.

Virtue has in herself the most engaging charms; and Christianity, as it places her in the strongest light, and adorned with all her native attractions, so it kindles a new fire in the soul, by adding to them the unutterable rewards which attend her votaries in an eternal state. Or if there

Digitized by Google

are men of a saturnine and heavy complexion, who are not easily lifted up by hope, there is the prospect of everlasting punishments to agitate their souls, and frighten them into the practice of virtue and an aversion from vice.

Whereas your sober Free-thinkers tell you, that virtue indeed is beautiful, and vice deformed; the former deserves your love, and the latter your abhorrence; but then, it is for their own sake, or on account of the good and evil which immediately attend them, and are inseparable from their respective natures. As for the immortality of the soul, or eternal punishments and rewards, those are openly ridiculed, or rendered suspicious by the most sly and laboured artifice.

I will not say, these men act treacherously in the cause of virtue; but will any one deny that they act foolishly who pretend to advance the interest of it by destroying or weakening the strongest motives to it, which are accommodated to all capacities, and fitted to work on all dispositions, and enforcing those alone which can affect only a generous and exalted mind?

Surely they must be destitute of passion themselves, and unacquainted with the force it hath on the minds of others, who can imagine that the mere beauty of fortitude, temperance, and justice is sufficient to sustain the mind of man in a severe course of self-denial against all the temptations of present profit and sensuality.

It is my opinion the Free-thinkers should be treated as a set of poor ignorant creatures, that have not sense to discover the excellency of religion; it being evident those men are no witches, nor likely to be guilty of any deep design, who proclaim aloud to the world that they have less motives to honesty than the rest of their fellow-subjects; who have all the inducements to the exercise of any virtue which a Free-thinker can possibly have, and besides the expectation of never-ending happiness or misery as the consequence of their choice.

Are not men actuated by their passions, and are not hope and fear the most powerful of our passions? And are there any objects which can rouse and awaken our hopes and fears, like those prospects that warm and penetrate the heart of a Christian, but are not regarded by a Free-thinker?

Digitized by Google

It is not only a clear point that a Christian breaks through stronger engagements whenever he surrenders himself to commit a criminal action, and is stung with a sharper remorse after it, than a Free-thinker; but it should even seem that a man who believes no future state, would act a foolish part in being thoroughly honest. For what reason is there why such a one should postpone his own private interest or pleasure to the doing his duty? If a Christian foregoes some present advantage for the sake of his conscience, he acts accountably, because it is with the view of gaining some greater future good. But he that, having no such view, should yet conscientiously deny himself a present good in any incident where he may save appearances is altogether as stupid as he that would trust him at such a juncture.

It will, perhaps, be said that virtue is her own reward, that a natural gratification attends good actions, which is alone sufficient to excite men to the performance of them. But although there is nothing more lovely than virtue, and the practice of it is the surest way to solid natural happiness even in this life; yet titles, estates, and fantastical pleasures are more ardently sought after by most men than the natural gratifications of a reasonable mind; and it cannot be denied that virtue and innocence are not always the readiest methods to attain that sort of happiness. Besides, the fumes of passion must be allayed, and reason must burn brighter than ordinary, to enable men to see and relish all the native beauties and delights of a virtuous life. And though we should grant our Free-thinkers to be a set of refined spirits, capable only of being enamoured of virtue, yet what would become of the bulk of mankind who have gross understandings, but lively senses and strong passions? What a deluge of lust and fraud and violence would in a little time overflow the whole nation if these wise advocates for morality were universally hearkened to? Lastly, opportunities do sometimes offer in which a man may wickedly make his fortune, or indulge a pleasure, without fear of temporal damage, either in reputation, health, or fortune. In such cases, what restraint do they lie under who have no regards beyond the grave? the inward compunctions of a wicked, as well as the joys of an upright mind, being grafted on the sense of another state.

Digitized by Google

The thought, "that our existence terminates with this life," doth naturally check the soul in any generous pursuit, contract her views, and fix them on temporary and selfish ends. It dethrones the reason, extinguishes all noble and heroic sentiments, and subjects the mind to the slavery of every present passion. The wise heathens of antiquity were not ignorant of this; hence they endeavoured by fables and conjectures, and the glimmerings of nature, to possess the minds of men with the belief of a future state, which has been since brought to light by the Gospel, and is now most inconsistently decried by a few weak men, who would have us believe that they promote virtue by turning religion into ridicule.

NUMB. LXII.

# The GUARDIAN.

"O fortunatos nimiùm, sua si bona nôrint!".
VIRG. *Georg.* 2, v. 458.

Too happy, if they knew their happy state.

*Friday, May* 22, 1713.

UPON the late election of king's scholars, my curiosity drew me to Westminster School. The sight of a place where I had not been for many years revived in my thoughts the tender images of my childhood, which by a great length of time had contracted a softness that rendered them inexpressibly agreeable. As it is usual with me to draw a secret unenvied pleasure from a thousand incidents overlooked by other men, I threw myself into a short transport, forgetting my age, and fancying myself a school-boy.

This imagination was strongly favoured by the presence of so many young boys, in whose looks were legible the sprightly passions of that age, which raised in me a sort of sympathy. Warm blood thrilled through every vein; the faded memory of those enjoyments that once gave me pleasure put on more lively colours, and a thousand gay amusements filled my mind.

Digitized by Google

It was not without regret that I was forsaken by this waking dream. The cheapness of puerile delights, the guiltless joy they leave upon the mind, the blooming hopes that lift up the soul in the ascent of life, the pleasure that attends the gradual opening of the imagination and the dawn of reason, made me think most men found that stage the most agreeable part of their journey.

When men come to riper years, the innocent diversions which exalted the spirits, and produced health of body, indolence of mind, and refreshing slumbers, are too often exchanged for criminal delights which fill the soul with anguish and the body with disease. The grateful employment of admiring and raising themselves to an imitation of the polite style, beautiful images, and noble sentiments of ancient authors, is abandoned for law-Latin, the lucubrations of our paltry newsmongers, and that swarm of vile pamphlets which corrupt our taste, and infest the public. The ideas of virtue which the characters of heroes had imprinted on their minds insensibly wear out, and they come to be influenced by the nearer examples of a degenerate age.

In the morning of life, when the soul first makes her entrance into the world, all things look fresh and gay; their novelty surprises, and every little glitter or gaudy colour transports the stranger. But by degrees the sense grows callous, and we lose that exquisite relish of trifles, by the time our minds should be supposed ripe for rational entertainments. I cannot make this reflexion without being touched with a commiseration of that species called "Beaus," the happiness of those men necessarily terminating with their childhood; who, from a want of knowing other pursuits, continue a fondness for the delights of that age after the relish of them is decayed.

Providence hath with a bountiful hand prepared variety of pleasures for the various stages of life. It behoves us not to be wanting to ourselves, in forwarding the intention of nature by the culture of our minds, and a due preparation of each faculty for the enjoyment of those objects it is capable of being affected with.

As our parts open and display by gentle degrees, we rise from the gratifications of sense to relish those of the mind. In the scale of pleasure, the lowest are sensual delights,

Digitized by Google

which are succeeded by the more enlarged views and gay portraitures of a lively imagination; and these give way to the sublimer pleasures of reason, which discovers the causes and designs, the frame, connexion, and symmetry of things, and fills the mind with the contemplation of intellectual beauty, order, and truth.

Hence I regard our public schools and universities, not only as nurseries of men for the service of the church and state, but also as places designed to teach mankind the most refined luxury, to raise the mind to its due perfection, and give it a taste for those entertainments which afford the highest transport, without the grossness or remorse that attend vulgar enjoyments.

In those blessed retreats men enjoy the sweets of solitude, and yet converse with the greatest *Genii* that have appeared in every age, wander through the delightful mazes of every art and science, and as they gradually enlarge their sphere of knowledge, at once rejoice in their present possessions, and are animated by the boundless prospect of future discoveries. *There* a generous emulation, a noble thirst of fame, a love of truth and honourable regards, reign in minds as yet untainted from the world. *There* the stock of learning transmitted down from the ancients is preserved, and receives a daily increase; and it is *thence* propagated by men who, having finished their studies, go into the world and spread that general knowledge and good taste throughout the land, which is so distant from the barbarism of its ancient inhabitants, or the first genius of its invaders. And as it is evident that our literature is owing to the schools and universities so it cannot be denied that these are owing to our religion.

It was chiefly, if not altogether, upon religious considerations that princes, as well as private persons, have erected Colleges, and assigned liberal endowments to students and professors. Upon the same account they meet with encouragement and protection from all Christian states, as being esteemed a necessary means to have the sacred oracles and primitive traditions of Christianity preserved and understood. And it is well known that, after a long night of ignorance and superstition, the reformation of the church and that of learning began together, and made proportionable advances, the

Digitized by Google

latter having been the effect of the former, which of course engaged men in the study of the learned languages and of antiquity.

Or, if a Free-thinker is ignorant of these facts, he may be convinced from the manifest reason of the thing. Is it not plain that our skill in literature is owing to the knowledge of Greek and Latin, which, that they are still preserved among us, can be ascribed only to a religious regard? What else should be the cause why the youth of Christendom, above the rest of mankind, are educated in the painful study of those dead languages, and that religious societies should peculiarly be employed in acquiring that sort of knowledge, and teaching it to others?

And it is more than probable that, in case our Free-thinkers could once achieve their glorious design of sinking the credit of the Christian religion, and causing those revenues to be withdrawn which their wiser forefathers had appointed to the support and encouragement of its teachers, in a little time the Shaster would be as intelligible as the Greek Testament; and we who want that spirit and curiosity which distinguished the ancient Grecians would by degrees relapse into the same state of barbarism which overspread the northern nations before they were enlightened by Christianity.

Some, perhaps, from the ill tendency and vile taste which appear in their writings, may suspect that the Free-thinkers are carrying on a malicious design against the Belles Lettres: for my part, I rather conceive them as unthinking wretches of short views and narrow capacities, who are not able to penetrate into the causes or consequences of things.

Digitized by Google

NUMB. LXIX.

# The GUARDIAN.

"Jupiter est quodcunque vides. . . ."—LUCAN.

Where'er you turn your eyes, 'tis God you see.

*Saturday, May* 30, 1713.

I HAD this morning a very valuable and kind present sent me of a translated work of a most excellent foreign writer, who makes a very considerable figure in the learned and Christian world. It is entitled, "A Demonstration of the Existence, Wisdom and Omnipotence of God, drawn from the Knowledge of Nature, particularly of Man, and fitted to the meanest Capacity; by the Archbishop of Cambray, Author of Telemachus; and translated from the French by the same hand[1] that Englished that excellent piece." This great author, in the writings which he has before produced, has manifested an heart full of virtuous sentiments, great benevolence to mankind, as well as a sincere and fervent piety towards his Creator. His talents and parts are a very great good to the world, and it is a pleasing thing to behold the polite arts subservient to religion, and recommending it from its natural beauty. Looking over the letters of my correspondents, I find one which celebrates this Treatise, and recommends it to my readers.

## To the GUARDIAN.

"SIR,

"I think I have somewhere read, in the writings of one whom I take to be a friend of yours, a saying which struck me very much, and as I remember it was to this purpose: 'The existence of a God is so far from being a thing that wants to be proved, that I think it is the only thing of which we are certain.' This is a sprightly and just expression; however, I dare say, you will not be displeased that I

[1] *I.e.* Abel Boyer.—ED.

Digitized by Google

put you in mind of saying something on the Demonstration of the Bishop of Cambray. A man of his talents views all things in a light different from that in which ordinary men see them, and the devout disposition of his soul turns all those talents to the improvement of the pleasures of a good life. His style clothes philosophy in a dress almost poetic, and his readers enjoy in full perfection the advantage, while they are reading him, of being what he is. The pleasing representation of the animal powers in the beginning of his work, and his consideration of the nature of man with the addition of reason in the subsequent discourse, impresses upon the mind a strong satisfaction in itself, and gratitude towards Him who bestowed that superiority over the brute world. These thoughts had such an effect upon the author himself that he has ended his discourse with a Prayer. This adoration has a sublimity in it befitting his character, and the emotions of his heart flow from wisdom and knowledge. I thought it would be proper for a Saturday's paper, and have translated it to make you a present of it. I have not, as the translator was obliged to do, confined myself to an exact version from the original, but have endeavoured to express the spirit of it, by taking the liberty to render his thoughts in such a way as I should have uttered them if they had been my own. It has been observed that the private letters of great men are the best pictures of their souls, but certainly their private devotions would be still more instructive, and I know not why they should not be as curious and entertaining.

"If you insert this Prayer, I know not but I may send you, for another occasion, one used by a very great wit of the last age, which has allusions to the errors of a very wild life, and I believe you will think is written with an uncommon spirit. The person whom I mean was an excellent writer, and the publication of this prayer of his may be, perhaps, some kind of antidote against the infection in his other writings. But this supplication of the bishop has in it a more happy and untroubled spirit; it is (if that is not saying something too fond) the worship of an angel concerned for those who had fallen, but himself still in the state of glory and innocence. The book ends with an act of devotion, to this effect:

Digitized by Google

"'O my God! If the greater number of mankind do not discover Thee in that glorious show of Nature which Thou hast placed before our eyes, it is not because Thou art far from every one of us. Thou art present to us more than any object which we touch with our hands; but our senses, and the passions which they produce in us, turn our attention from Thee. Thy light shines in the midst of darkness, but the darkness comprehends it not. Thou, O Lord, dost every way display thyself. Thou shinest in all Thy works, but art not regarded by heedless and unthinking man. The whole creation talks aloud of Thee, and echoes with the repetitions of Thy holy name. But such is our insensibility that we are deaf to the great and universal voice of nature. Thou art every where about us and within us; but we wander from ourselves, become strangers to our own souls, and do not apprehend Thy presence. O Thou who art the eternal fountain of light and beauty, who art the ancient of days, without beginning and without end; O Thou, who art the life of all that truly live, those can never fail to find Thee who seek for Thee within themselves. But, alas! the very gifts which Thou bestowest upon us do so employ our thoughts that they hinder us from perceiving the hand which conveys them to us. We live by Thee, and yet we live without thinking on Thee; but, O Lord, what is life in the ignorance of Thee! A dead unactive piece of matter, a flower that withers, a river that glides away, a palace that hastens to its ruin, a picture made up of fading colours, a mass of shining ore, strike our imaginations, and make us sensible of their existence. We regard them as objects capable of giving us pleasure, not considering that Thou conveyest through them all the pleasure which we imagine they give us. Such vain empty objects that are only the shadows of being, are proportioned to our low and grovelling thoughts. That beauty which Thou hast poured out on Thy creation is as a veil which hides Thee from our eyes. As Thou art a being too pure and exalted to pass through our senses, Thou art not regarded by men, who have debased their nature, and have made themselves like the beasts that perish. So infatuated are they, that, notwithstanding they know what is wisdom and virtue, which have neither sound, nor colour, nor smell, nor taste, nor figure, nor any other sensible quality, they can

Digitized by Google

doubt of Thy existence, because Thou art not apprehended by the grosser organs of sense. Wretches that we are! we consider shadows as realities, and truth as a phantom. That which is nothing is all to us, and that which is all appears to us nothing. What do we see in all nature but Thee, O my God! Thou, and only Thou, appearest in every thing. When I consider Thee, O Lord, I am swallowed up and lost in contemplation of Thee. Every thing besides Thee, even my own existence, vanishes and disappears in the contemplation of Thee. I am lost to myself and fall into nothing when I think on Thee. The man who does not see Thee has beheld nothing; he who does not taste Thee, has a relish of nothing. His being is vain, and his life but a dream. Set up Thyself, O Lord, set up Thyself that we may behold Thee. As wax consumes before the fire, and as the smoke is driven away, so let thine enemies vanish out of Thy presence. How unhappy is that soul who, without the sense of Thee, has no God, no hope, no comfort to support him! But how happy the man who searches, sighs, and thirsts after Thee! But he only is fully happy on whom Thou liftest up the light of Thy countenance, whose tears Thou hast wiped away, and who enjoys in Thy loving-kindness the completion of all his desires. How long, how long, O Lord, shall I wait for that day when I shall possess, in Thy presence, fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore! O my God, in this pleasing hope, my bones rejoice and cry out, Who is like unto Thee! My heart melts away, and my soul faints within me, when I look up to Thee who art the God of my life, and my portion to all eternity."



Digitized by Google

NUMB. LXX.

# The GUARDIAN.

"—— mentisque capacius altae."—OVID. *Met.* l. 1, v. 76.

Of thoughts enlarg'd, and more exalted mind.

*Monday, June* 1, 1713.

As I was the other day taking a solitary walk in St. Paul's I indulged my thoughts in the pursuit of a certain analogy between that fabric and the Christian Church in the largest sense. The divine order and economy of the one seemed to be emblematically set forth by the just, plain, and majestic architecture of the other. And as the one consists of a great variety of parts united in the same regular design, according to the truest art, and most exact proportion; so the other contains a decent subordination of members, various sacred institutions, sublime doctrines, and solid precepts of morality digested into the same design, and with an admirable concurrence tending to one view, the happiness and exaltation of human nature.

In the midst of my contemplation, I beheld a fly upon one of the pillars; and it straightway came into my head, that this same fly was a Free-thinker. For it required some comprehension in the eye of the spectator, to take in at one view the various parts of the building, in order to observe their symmetry and design. But to the fly, whose prospect was confined to a little part of one of the stones of a single pillar, the joint beauty of the whole or the distinct use of its parts were inconspicuous, and nothing could appear but small inequalities in the surface of the hewn stone, which in the view of that insect seemed so many deformed rocks and precipices.

The thoughts of a Free-thinker are employed on certain minute particularities of religion, the difficulty of a single text, or the unaccountableness of some step of Providence or point of doctrine to his narrow faculties, without comprehending the scope and design of Christianity, the perfection to

Digitized by Google

which it raiseth human nature, the light it hath shed abroad in the world, and the close connexion it hath as well with the good of public societies as with that of particular persons.

This raised in me some reflexions on that frame or disposition which is called "largeness of mind," its necessity towards forming a true judgment of things, and, where the soul is not incurably stinted by nature, what are the likeliest methods to give it enlargement.

It is evident that Philosophy doth open and enlarge the mind by the general views to which men are habituated in that study, and by the contemplation of more numerous and distant objects than fall within the sphere of mankind in the ordinary pursuits of life. Hence it comes to pass that philosophers judge of most things very differently from the vulgar. Some instances of this may be seen in the Theætetus of Plato, where Socrates makes the following remarks, among others of the like nature:

"When a philosopher hears ten thousand acres mentioned as a great estate, he looks upon it as an inconsiderable spot, having been used to contemplate the whole globe of earth. Or when he beholds a man elated with the nobility of his race because he can reckon a series of seven rich ancestors, the philosopher thinks him a stupid ignorant fellow, whose mind cannot reach to a general view of human nature, which would shew him that we have all innumerable ancestors, among whom are crowds of rich and poor, kings and slaves, Greeks and Barbarians." Thus far Socrates, who was accounted wiser than the rest of the Heathens for notions which approach the nearest to Christianity.

As all parts and branches of Philosophy, or speculative knowledge, are useful in that respect, Astronomy is peculiarly adapted to remedy a little and narrow spirit. In that science there are good reasons assigned to prove the sun an hundred thousand times bigger than our earth, and the distance of the stars so prodigious, that a cannon-bullet continuing in its ordinary rapid motion, would not arrive from hence at the nearest of them in the space of an hundred and fifty thousand years. These ideas wonderfully dilate and expand the mind. There is something in the immensity of this distance that shocks and overwhelms the imagination; it is too big for the grasp of a human intellect: estates, provinces, and kingdoms

Digitized by Google

vanish at its presence. It were to be wished a certain prince,[1] who hath encouraged the study of it in his subjects, had been himself a proficient in astronomy. This might have shewed him how mean an ambition that was which terminated in a small part of what is itself but a point, in respect to that part of the universe which lies within our view.

But the Christian Religion ennobleth and enlargeth the mind beyond any other profession or science whatsoever. Upon that scheme, while the earth, and the transient enjoyments of this life, shrink into the narrowest dimensions, and are accounted as "the dust of a balance, the drop of a bucket, yea, less than nothing," the intellectual world opens wider to our view. The perfections of the Deity, the nature and excellence of virtue, the dignity of the human soul, are displayed in the largest characters. The mind of man seems to adapt itself to the different nature of its objects; it is contracted and debased by being conversant in little and low things, and feels a proportionable enlargement arising from the contemplation of these great and sublime ideas.

The greatness of things is comparative; and this does not only hold in respect of extension, but likewise in respect of dignity, duration, and all kinds of perfection. Astronomy opens the mind, and alters our judgment, with regard to the magnitude of extended beings; but Christianity produceth an universal greatness of soul. Philosophy increaseth our views in every respect, but Christianity extends them to a degree beyond the light of nature.

How mean must the most exalted potentate upon earth appear to that eye which takes in innumerable orders of blessed spirits, differing in glory and perfection! How little must the amusements of sense, and the ordinary occupations of mortal men, seem to one who is engaged in so noble a pursuit as the assimilation of himself to the Deity, which is the proper employment of every Christian!

And the improvement which grows from habituating the mind to the comprehensive views of religion must not be thought wholly to regard the understanding. Nothing is of greater force to subdue the inordinate motions of the heart, and to regulate the will. Whether a man be actuated by his

[1] *I.e.*, Louis XIV.—ED.

Digitized by Google

passions or his reason, these are first wrought upon by some object, which stirs the soul in proportion to its apparent dimensions. Hence irreligious men, whose short prospects are filled with earth, and sense, and mortal life, are invited, by these mean ideas, to actions proportionably little and low. But a mind whose views are enlightened and extended by religion is animated to nobler pursuits by more sublime and remote objects.

There is not any instance of weakness in the Free-thinkers that raises my indignation more than their tending to ridicule Christians as men of narrow understandings, and to pass themselves upon the world for persons of superior sense, and more enlarged views. But I leave it to any impartial man to judge which hath the nobler sentiments, which the greater views; he whose notions are stinted to a few miserable inlets of sense, or he whose sentiments are raised above the common taste by the anticipation of those delights which will satiate the soul, when the whole capacity of her nature is branched out into new faculties? He who looks for nothing beyond this short span of duration, or he whose aims are co-extended with the endless length of eternity? He who derives his spirit from the elements, or he who thinks it was inspired by the Almighty?

NUMB. LXXVII.

# The GUARDIAN.

"—— Certum voto pete finem."—HOR. *Ep.* 2, l. 1, v. 56.

"—— To wishes fix an end."—CREECH.

*Tuesday, June* 9, 1713.

THE writers of morality assign two sorts of Goods. The one is in itself desirable; the other is to be desired, not on account of its own excellency, but for the sake of some other thing which it is instrumental to obtain. These are usually distinguished by the appellations of End and Means. We are prompted by nature to desire the former, but that we have any appetite for the latter is owing to choice and deliberation.

Digitized by Google

But as wise men engage in the pursuit of means from a farther view of some natural good with which they are connected; fools, who are actuated by imitation and not by reason, blindly pursue the means, without any design or prospect of applying them. The result whereof is, that they entail upon themselves the anxiety and toil, but are debarred from the subsequent delights which arise to wiser men; since their views, not reaching the end, terminate in those things which, although they have a relative goodness, yet considered absolutely are indifferent, or it may be evil.

The principle of this misconduct is a certain short-sightedness in the mind. And as this defect is branched forth into innumerable errors in life, and hath infected all ranks and conditions of men, so it more eminently appears in three species, the Critics, Misers, and Free-thinkers. I shall endeavour to make good this observation with regard to each of them. And first of the Critics.

Profit and pleasure are the ends that a reasonable creature would propose to obtain by study, or indeed by any other undertaking. Those parts of learning which relate to the imagination, as eloquence and poetry, produce an immediate pleasure in the mind. And sublime and useful truths, when they are conveyed in apt allegories or beautiful images, make more distinct and lasting impressions; by which means the fancy becomes subservient to the understanding, and the mind is at the same time delighted and instructed. The exercise of the understanding in the discovery of truth is likewise attended with great pleasure, as well as immediate profit. It not only strengthens our faculties, purifies the soul, subdues the passions; but, besides these advantages, there is also a secret joy that flows from intellectual operations, proportioned to the nobleness of the faculty, and not the less affecting because inward and unseen.

But the mere exercise of the memory as such, instead of bringing pleasure or immediate benefit, is a thing of vain irksomeness and fatigue, especially when employed in the acquisition of languages, which is, of all others, the most dry and painful occupation. There must be therefore something further proposed, or a wise man would never engage in it. And, indeed, the very reason of the thing plainly intimates that the motive which first drew men to affect a knowledge

Digitized by Google

in dead tongues was that they looked on them as means to convey more useful and entertaining knowledge into their minds.

There are nevertheless certain critics, who, seeing that Greek and Latin are in request, join in a thoughtless pursuit of those languages, without any further view. They look on the ancient authors, but it is with an eye to phraseology, or certain minute particulars which are valuable for no other reason but because they are despised and forgotten by the rest of mankind. The divine maxims of morality, the exact pictures of human life, the profound discoveries in the arts and sciences, just thoughts, bright images, sublime sentiments, are overlooked, while the mind is learnedly taken up in verbal remarks.

Was a critic ever known to read Plato with a contemplative mind; or Cicero, in order to imbibe the noble sentiments of virtue and a public spirit which are conspicuous in the writings of that great man; or to peruse the Greek or Roman historians, with an intention to form his own life upon the plan of the illustrious patterns they exhibit to our view? Plato wrote in Greek. Cicero's Latin is fine. And it often lies in a man's way to quote the ancient historians.

There is no entertainment upon earth more noble and befitting a reasonable mind than the perusal of good authors, or that better qualifies a man to pass his life with satisfaction to himself, or advantage to the public. But where men of short views and mean souls give themselves to that sort of employment which nature never designed them for, they, indeed, keep one another in countenance; but, instead of cultivating and adorning their own minds, or acquiring an ability to be useful to the world, they reap no other advantage from their labours than the dry consolation arising from the applauses they bestow upon each other.

And the same weakness, or defect of the mind from whence Pedantry takes its rise does likewise give birth to Avarice. Words and money are both to be regarded as only marks of things. And as the knowledge of the one, so the possession of the other is of no use, unless directed to a further end. A mutual commerce could not be carried on among men if some common standard had not been agreed upon, to which the value of all the various products of art and

Digitized by Google

nature were reducible, and which might be of the same use in the conveyance of property as words are in that of ideas. Gold, by its beauty, scarceness, and durable nature, seems designed by Providence to a purpose so excellent and advantageous to mankind. Upon these considerations that metal came first into esteem. But such who cannot see beyond what is nearest in the pursuit, beholding mankind touched with an affection for gold, and being ignorant of the true reason that introduced this odd passion into human nature, imagine some intrinsic worth in the metal to be the cause of it. Hence the same men who, had they been turned towards learning, would have employed themselves in laying up words in their memory, are, by a different application, employed to as much purpose in treasuring up gold in their coffers. They differ only in the object; the principle on which they act, and the inward frame of mind, is the same in the Critic and the Miser.

And upon a thorough observation, our modern sect of Free-thinkers will be found to labour under the same defect with those two inglorious species. Their short views are terminated in the next objects, and their specious pretences for liberty and truth are so many instances of mistaking the means for the end. But the setting these points in a clear light must be the subject of another paper.

NUMB. LXXXIII.

# The GUARDIAN.

"Nimirum insanus paucis videatur, eo quod
Maxima pars hominum morbo jactatur eodem."
HOR. *Sat.* 3, l. 2, v. 120.

"——— Few think these mad, for most, like these,
Are sick and troubled with the same disease."—CREECH.

*Tuesday, June* 16, 1713.

THERE is a restless endeavour in the mind of man after Happiness. This appetite is wrought into the original frame of our nature, and exerts itself in all parts of the creation

Digitized by Google

that are endued with any degree of thought or sense. But, as the human mind is dignified by a more comprehensive faculty than can be found in the inferior animals, it is natural for men not only to have an eye each to his own happiness, but also to endeavour to promote that of others in the same rank of being: and in proportion to the generosity that is ingredient in the temper of the soul, the object of its benevolence is of a larger and narrower extent. There is hardly a spirit upon earth so mean and contracted as to centre all regards on its own interest, exclusive of the rest of mankind. Even the selfish man has some share of love which he bestows on his family and his friends. A nobler mind hath at heart the common interest of the society or country of which he makes a part. And there is still a more diffusive spirit, whose being or intentions reach the whole mass of mankind, and are continued beyond the present age, to a succession of future generations.

The advantage arising to him who hath a tincture of this generosity on his soul is, that he is affected with a sublimer joy than can be comprehended by one who is destitute of that noble relish. The happiness of the rest of mankind hath a natural connection with that of a reasonable mind. And in proportion as the actions of each individual contribute to this end, he must be thought to deserve well or ill both of the world and of himself. I have in a late paper observed, that men who have no reach of thought do oft misplace their affections on the means, without respect to the end, and by a preposterous desire of things in themselves indifferent forego the enjoyment of that happiness which those things are instrumental to obtain. This observation has been considered with regard to Critics and Misers; I shall now apply it to Free-thinkers.

Liberty and truth are the main points which these gentlemen pretend to have in view; to proceed therefore methodically, I will endeavour to shew, in the first place, that liberty and truth are not in themselves desirable, but only as they relate to a farther end. And secondly, that the sort of liberty and truth (allowing them those names) which our Free-thinkers use all their industry to promote, is destructive of that end, viz. human Happiness; and consequently that species, as such, instead of being encouraged or esteemed,

Digitized by Google

merit the detestation, and abhorrence of all honest men. In the last place, I design to shew that, under the pretence of advancing liberty and truth, they do in reality promote the two contrary evils.

As to the first point, it has been observed that it is the duty of each particular person to aim at the happiness of his fellow-creatures; and that as this view is of a wider or narrower extent, it argues a mind more or less virtuous. Hence it follows that a liberty of doing good actions which conduce to the felicity of mankind, and a knowledge of such truths as might either give us pleasure in the contemplation of them, or direct our conduct to the great ends of life, are valuable perfections. But shall a good man, therefore, prefer a liberty to commit murder or adultery before the wholesome restraint of divine and human laws? Or shall a wise man prefer the knowledge of a troublesome and afflicting truth before a pleasant error that would cheer his soul with joy and comfort, and be attended with no ill consequences? Surely no man of common sense would thank him who had put it in his power to execute the sudden suggestions of a fit of passion or madness, or imagine himself obliged to a person who, by forwardly informing him of ill news, had caused his soul to anticipate that sorrow which she would never have felt so long as the ungrateful truth lay concealed.

Let us then respect the Happiness of our species, and in this light examine the proceedings of the Free-thinkers. From what giants and monsters would these knight-errants undertake to free the world? From the ties that religion imposeth on our minds, from the expectation of a future judgment, and from the terrors of a troubled conscience, not by reforming men's lives, but by giving encouragement to their vices. What are those important truths of which they would convince mankind? That there is no such thing as a wise and just Providence; that the mind of man is corporeal; that religion is a state-trick, contrived to make men honest and virtuous, and to procure a subsistence to others for teaching and exhorting them to be so; that the good tidings of Life and Immortality brought to light by the Gospel are fables and impostures: from believing that we are made in the image of God, they would degrade us to an opinion that we are on a level with the beasts that perish. What pleasure

Digitized by Google

or what advantage do these notions bring to mankind? Is it of any use to the public that good men should lose the comfortable prospect of a reward to their virtue, or the wicked be encouraged to persist in their impiety, from an assurance that they shall not be punished for it hereafter.

Allowing, therefore, these men to be patrons of liberty and truth, yet it is of such truths and that sort of liberty which makes them justly be looked upon as enemies to the peace and happiness of the world. But upon a thorough and impartial view it will be found that their endeavours, instead of advancing the cause of liberty and truth, tend only to introduce slavery and error among men. There are two parts in our nature, the baser, which consists of our senses and passions, and the more noble and rational, which is properly the human part, the other being common to us with brutes. The inferior part is generally much stronger, and has always the start of reason, which if, in the perpetual struggle between them, it were not aided from heaven by religion would almost universally be vanquished, and man become a slave to his passions, which as it is the most grievous and shameful slavery, so it is the genuine result of that liberty which is proposed by overturning religion. Nor is the other part of their design better executed. Look into their pretended truths; are they not so many wretched absurdities, maintained in opposition to the light of nature and divine revelation by sly inuendos and cold jests, by such pitiful sophisms and such confused and indigested notions that one would vehemently suspect those men usurped the name of Free-thinkers with the same view that hypocrites do that of godliness, that it may serve for a cloke to cover the contrary defect?

I shall close this discourse with a parallel reflexion on these three species, who seem to be allied by a certain agreement in mediocrity of understanding. A Critic is entirely given up to the pursuit of learning; when he has got it, is his judgment clearer, his imagination livelier, or his manners more polite than those of other men? Is it observed that a Miser, when he has acquired his superfluous estate, eats, drinks, or sleeps with more satisfaction, that he has a cheerfuller mind, or relishes any of the enjoyments of life better than his neighbours? The Free-thinkers plead hard for a licence to think

Digitized by Google

freely; they have it: but what use do they make of it? Are they eminent for any sublime discoveries in any of the arts and sciences? have they been authors of any inventions that conduce to the well-being of mankind? Do their writings shew a greater depth of design, a clearer method, or more just and correct reasoning than those of other men?

There is a great resemblance in their genius, but the Critic and Miser are only ridiculous and contemptible creatures, while the Free-thinker is also a pernicious one.

NUMB. LXXXVIII.

# The GUARDIAN.

"Mens agitat molem. . . ."—VIRG. *Æn.* 6, v. 727.

A mind informs the mass.

*Monday, June* 22, 1713.

To one who regards things with a philosophical eye, and hath a soul capable of being delighted with the sense that truth and knowledge prevail among men, it must be a grateful reflexion to think that the sublimest truths, which among the heathens only here and there one of brighter parts and more leisure than ordinary could attain to, are now grown familiar to the meanest inhabitants of these nations.

Whence came this surprising change, that regions formerly inhabited by ignorant and savage people should now outshine ancient Greece, and the other eastern countries, so renowned of old, in the most elevated notions of theology and morality? Is it the effect of our own parts and industry? Have our common mechanics more refined understandings than the ancient philosophers? It is owing to the God of Truth, who came down from heaven, and condescended to be himself our teacher. It is as we are Christians that we profess mor[illegible] and divine truths than the rest of mankind.

If ther[illegible] Free-thinkers who are not direct
atheists, [illegible]ine one to believe them ignorant
of what i[illegible] And it is for their information

Digitized by Google

that I write this paper, the design of which is to compare the ideas that Christians entertain of the being and attributes of a God, with the gross notions of the Heathen world. Is it possible for the mind of man to conceive a more august idea of the Deity than is set forth in the Holy Scriptures? I shall throw together some passages relating to this subject, which I propose only as philosophical sentiments, to be considered by a Free-thinker.

"Though there be that are called gods, yet to us there is but one God. He made the heaven, and heaven of heavens, with all their host; the earth and all things that are therein; the seas and all that is therein; He said, let them be, and it was so. He hath stretched forth the heavens. He hath founded the earth and hung it upon nothing. He hath shut up the sea with doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed. The Lord is an invisible spirit, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. He is the fountain of life. He preserveth man and beast. He giveth food to all flesh. In His hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich. He bringeth low and lifteth up. He killeth and maketh alive. He woundeth and He healeth. By Him kings reign, and princes decree justice, and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without Him. All angels, authorities, and powers are subject to Him. He appointeth the moon for seasons, and the sun knoweth His going down. He thundereth with His voice, and directeth it under the whole heaven, and His lightning unto the ends of the earth. Fire and hail, snow and vapour, wind and storm, fulfil His word. The Lord is King for ever and ever, and His dominion is an everlasting dominion. The earth and the heavens shall perish, but Thou, O Lord, remainest. They all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end. God is perfect in knowledge; His understanding is infinite. He is the Father of lights. He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven. The Lord beholdeth all the children of men from the place of His habitation, and considereth all their works. He knoweth our down-sitting and up-rising. He compasseth

Digitized by Google

our path and counteth our steps. He is acquainted with all our ways; and when we enter our closet and shut our door He seeth us. He knoweth the things that come into our mind, every one of them: and no thought can be withholden from Him. The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. He is a Father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow. He is the God of peace, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort and consolation. The Lord is great, and we know Him not; His greatness is unsearchable. Who but He hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out the heavens with a span? Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty. Thou art very great, Thou art clothed with honour. Heaven is Thy throne and earth is Thy footstool."

Can the mind of a philosopher rise to a more just and magnificent, and at the same time a more amiable idea of the Deity than is here set forth in the strongest images and most emphatical language? And yet this is the language of shepherds and fishermen. The illiterate Jews and poor persecuted Christians retained these noble sentiments, while the polite and powerful nations of the earth were given up to that sottish sort of worship of which the following elegant description is extracted from one of the inspired writers.

"Who hath formed a god, and molten an image that is profitable for nothing? The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea he is hungry and his strength faileth. He drinketh no water and is faint. A man planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. He burneth part thereof in the fire. He roasteth roast. He warmeth himself. And the residue thereof he maketh a god. He falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god. None considereth in his heart, I have burnt part of it in the fire, yea also, I have baked bread upon the coals thereof: I have roasted flesh and eaten it; and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?"

In such circumstances as these, for a man to declare for free-thinking, and disengage himself from the yoke of idolatry,

Digitized by Google

were doing honour to human nature, and a work well becoming the great asserters of reason. But in a church, where our adoration is directed to the supreme Being, and (to say the least) where is nothing either in the object or manner of worship that contradicts the light of nature; there, under the pretence of free-thinking, to rail at the religious institutions of their country, sheweth an undistinguishing genius that mistakes opposition for freedom of thought. And, indeed, notwithstanding the pretences of some few among our Free-thinkers, I can hardly think there are men so stupid and inconsistent with themselves, as to have a serious regard for Natural Religion, and at the same time use their utmost endeavours to destroy the credit of those sacred Writings, which as they have been the means of bringing these parts of the world to the knowledge of natural religion, so in case they lose their authority over the minds of men, we should of course sink into the same idolatry which we see practised by other unenlightened nations.

If a person who exerts himself in the modern way of free-thinking be not a stupid idolater, it is undeniable that he contributes all he can to the making other men so, either by ignorance or design; which lays him under the dilemma, I will not say of being a fool or knave, but of incurring the contempt or detestation of mankind.

NUMB. LXXXIX.

# The GUARDIAN.

"Igneus est ollis vigor, et cœlestis origo
Seminibus——" VIRG. *Æn.* 6, v. 730.

They boast ethereal vigour, and are form'd
From seeds of heavenly birth.

*Tuesday, June* 23, 1713.

THE same faculty of reason and understanding, which placeth us above the brute part of the creation, doth also subject our minds to greater and more manifold disquiets than

Digitized by Google

creatures of an inferior rank are sensible of. It is by this that we anticipate future disasters, and oft create to ourselves real pain from imaginary evils, as well as multiply the pangs arising from those which cannot be avoided.

It behoves us therefore to make the best use of that sublime talent, which, so long as it continues the instrument of passion, will serve only to make us more miserable, in proportion as we are more excellent than other beings.

It is the privilege of a thinking being to withdraw from the objects that solicit his senses, and turn his thoughts inward on himself. For my own part I often mitigate the pain arising from the little misfortunes and disappointments that checker human life by this introversion of my faculties, wherein I regard my own soul as the image of her Creator, and receive great consolation from beholding those perfections which testify her divine original, and lead me into some knowledge of her everlasting archetype.

But there is not any property or circumstance of my being that I contemplate with more joy than my Immortality. I can easily overlook any present momentary sorrow, when I reflect that it is in my power to be happy a thousand years hence. If it were not for this thought, I had rather be an oyster than a man, the most stupid and senseless of animals than a reasonable mind tortured with an extreme innate desire of that perfection which it despairs to obtain.

It is with great pleasure that I behold instinct, reason, and faith concurring to attest this comfortable truth. It is revealed from heaven, it is discovered by philosophers, and the ignorant, unenlightened part of mankind have a natural propensity to believe it. It is an agreeable entertainment to reflect on the various shapes under which this doctrine has appeared in the world. The Pythagorean transmigration, the sensual habitations of the Mahometan, and the shady realms of Pluto, do all agree in the main points, the continuation of our existence, and the distribution of rewards and punishments, proportioned to the merits or demerits of men in this life.

But in all these schemes there is something gross and improbable, that shocks a reasonable and speculative mind. Whereas nothing can be more rational and sublime than the Christian idea of a Future State. "Eye hath not seen, nor

Digitized by Google

ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for those that love him." The above-mentioned schemes are narrow transcripts of our present state: but in this indefinite description there is something ineffably great and noble. The mind of man must be raised to a higher pitch, not only to partake the enjoyments of the Christian Paradise, but even to be able to frame any notion of them.

Nevertheless, in order to gratify our imagination, and by way of condescension to our low way of thinking, the ideas of light, glory, a crown, &c. are made use of to adumbrate that which we cannot directly understand. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away, and behold all things are new. There shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light, and shall make them drink of the river of his pleasures; and they shall reign for ever and ever. They shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away."

These are cheering reflections; and I have often wondered that men could be found so dull and phlegmatic as to prefer the thought of annihilation before them; or so ill-natured as to endeavour to persuade mankind to the disbelief of what is so pleasing and profitable even in the prospect; or so blind as not to see that there is a Deity, and if there be, that this scheme of things flows from his attributes, and evidently corresponds with the other parts of his creation.

I know not how to account for this absurd turn of thought, except it proceed from a want of other employment joined with an affectation of singularity. I shall, therefore, inform our modern Free-thinkers of two points whereof they seem to be ignorant. The first is, that it is not the being singular, but being singular for something, that argues either extraordinary endowments of nature, or benevolent intentions to mankind, which draws the admiration and esteem of the world. A mistake in this point naturally arises from that



Digitized by Google

confusion of thought which I do not remember to have seen so great instances of in any writers as in certain modern Free-thinkers.

The other point is, that there are innumerable objects within the reach of a human mind, and each of these objects may be viewed in innumerable lights and positions, and the relations arising between them are innumerable. There is, therefore, an infinity of things whereon to employ their thoughts, if not with advantage to the world, at least with amusement to themselves, and without offence or prejudice to other people. If they proceed to exert their talent of free-thinking in this way, they may be innocently dull, and no one take any notice of it. But to see men without either wit or argument pretend to run down divine and human laws, and treat their fellow-subjects with contempt for professing a belief of those points on which the present as well as future interest of mankind depends, is not to be endured. For my own part, I shall omit no endeavours to render their persons as despicable, and their practices as odious, in the eye of the world, as they deserve.

NUMB. CXXVI.

# The GUARDIAN.

"Homo sum, humani nihil à me alienum puto."
TER. *Heaut.* Act I, Sc. I.

I am a man, and have a fellow-feeling of every thing belonging to man.

*Wednesday, August* 5, 1713.

IF we consider the whole scope of the creation that lies within our view, the moral and intellectual, as well as the natural and corporeal, we shall perceive throughout a certain correspondence of the parts, a similitude of operation and unity of design, which plainly demonstrate the universe to be the work of one infinitely good and wise Being; and that the system of thinking beings is actuated by laws derived

Digitized by Google

from the same divine power which ordained those by which the corporeal system is upheld.

From the contemplation of the order, motion, and cohesion of natural bodies, philosophers are now agreed that there is a mutual attraction between the most distant parts at least of this solar system. All those bodies that revolve round the sun are drawn towards each other, and towards the sun, by some secret, uniform and never-ceasing principle. Hence it is that the earth (as well as the other planets) without flying off in a tangent line, constantly rolls about the sun, and the moon about the earth, without deserting her companion in so many thousand years. And as the larger systems of the universe are held together by this cause, so likewise the particular globes derive their cohesion and consistence from it.

Now, if we carry our thoughts from the corporeal to the moral world, we may observe in the Spirits or Minds of men a like principle of attraction, whereby they are drawn together in communities, clubs, families, friendships, and all the various species of society. As in bodies, where the quantity is the same, the attraction is strongest between those which are placed nearest to each other, so it is likewise in the minds of men, *cæteris paribus*, between those which are most nearly related. Bodies that are placed at the distance of many millions of miles may nevertheless attract and constantly operate on each other, although this action do not shew itself by an union or approach of those distant bodies, so long as they are withheld by the contrary forces of other bodies, which, at the same time, attract them different ways, but would, on the supposed removal of all other bodies, mutually approach and unite with each other. The like holds with regard to the human soul, whose affection towards the individuals of the same species who are distantly related to it is rendered inconspicuous by its more powerful attraction towards those who have a nearer relation to it. But as those are removed the tendency which before lay concealed doth gradually disclose itself.

A man who has no family is more strongly attracted towards his friends and neighbours; and, if absent from these, he naturally falls into an acquaintance with those of his own city or country who chance to be in the same place.

Digitized by Google

Two Englishmen meeting at Rome or Constantinople soon run into a familiarity. And in China or Japan Europeans would think their being so a good reason for their uniting in particular converse. Further, in case we suppose ourselves translated into Jupiter or Saturn, and there to meet a Chinese or other more distant native of our own planet, we should look on him as a near relation, and readily commence a friendship with him. These are natural reflexions, and such as may convince us that we are linked by an imperceptible chain to every individual of the human race.

The several great bodies which compose the solar system are kept from joining together at the common centre of gravity by the rectilinear motions the Author of nature hath impressed on each of them; which, concurring with the attractive principle, form their respective orbits round the sun, upon the ceasing of which motions, the general law of gravitation that is now thwarted would shew itself by drawing them all into one mass. After the same manner, in the parallel case of society, private passions and motions of the soul do often obstruct the operation of that benevolent uniting instinct implanted in human-nature; which, notwithstanding, doth still exert, and will not fail to shew itself when those obstructions are taken away.

The mutual gravitation of bodies cannot be explained any other way than by resolving it into the immediate operation of God, who never ceases to dispose and actuate his creatures in a manner suitable to their respective beings. So neither can that reciprocal attraction in the minds of men be accounted for by any other cause. It is not the result of education, law, or fashion; but is a principle originally ingrafted in the very first formation of the soul by the Author of our nature.

And as the attractive power in bodies is the most universal principle which produceth innumerable effects, and is a key to explain the various phenomena of nature; so the corresponding social appetite in human souls is the great spring and source of moral actions. This it is that inclines each individual to an intercourse with his species, and models every one to that behaviour which best suits with the common well-being. Hence that sympathy in our nature whereby we feel the pains and joys of our fellow-creatures.

Digitized by Google

Hence that prevalent love in parents towards their children, which is neither founded on the merit of the object, nor yet on self-interest. It is this that makes us inquisitive concerning the affairs of distant nations which can have no influence on our own. It is this that extends our care to future generations, and excites us to acts of beneficence towards those who are not yet in being, and consequently from whom we can expect no recompence. In a word, hence arises that diffusive sense of Humanity so unaccountable to the selfish man who is untouched with it, and is, indeed, a sort of monster or anomalous production.

These thoughts do naturally suggest the following particulars. First, That as social inclinations are absolutely necessary to the well-being of the world, it is the duty and interest of each individual to cherish and improve them to the benefit of mankind; the duty, because it is agreeable to the intention of the Author of our being, who aims at the common good of his creatures, and, as an indication of his will, hath implanted the seeds of mutual benevolence in our souls; the interest, because the good of the whole is inseparable from that of the parts; in promoting therefore the common good, every one doth at the same time promote his own private interest. Another observation I shall draw from the premises is, That it makes a signal proof of the divinity of the Christian religion, that the main duty which it inculcates above all others is charity. Different maxims and precepts have distinguished the different sects of philosophy and religion: our Lord's peculiar precept is, "Love thy neighbour as thyself. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

I will not say that what is a most shining proof of our religion is not often a reproach to its professors; but this I think very plain, that, whether we regard the analogy of nature, as it appears in the mutual attraction or gravitations of the mundane system, in the general frame and constitution of the human soul, or lastly, in the ends and aptnesses which are discoverable in all parts of the visible and intellectual world, we shall not doubt but the precept which is the characteristic of our religion came from the Author of nature. Some of our modern Free-thinkers would indeed insinuate the Christian morals to be defective, because (say

Digitized by Google

they) there is no mention made in the gospel of the virtue of friendship. These sagacious men (if I may be allowed the use of that vulgar saying) "cannot see the wood for trees." That a religion whereof the main drift is to inspire its professors with the most noble and disinterested spirit of love, charity, and beneficence to all mankind, or, in other words, with a friendship to every individual man, should be taxed with the want of that very virtue, is surely a glaring evidence of the blindness and prejudice of its adversaries.

[NOTE.—The following letter in "Guardian," No. 9, Saturday, March 21, 1713 was probably by Berkeley:

"To the GUARDIAN.

"March 16.

"SIR,—By your paper of Saturday last you give the town hopes that you will dedicate that day to religion. You could not begin it better than by warning your pupils of the poison vended under a pretence to free-thinking. If you can spare room in your next Saturday's paper for a few lines on the same subject, these are at your disposal.

"I happened to be present at a public conversation of some of the defenders of this 'Discourse of Free-thinking,' and others that differed from them; where I had the diversion of hearing the same man in one breath persuade us to freedom of thought, and in the next offer to demonstrate that we had no freedom in anything. One would think men should blush to find themselves entangled in a greater contradiction than any the 'Discourse' ridicules. This principle of free fatality or necessary liberty is a worthy fundamental of the new sect; and indeed this opinion is in evidence and clearness so nearly related to Transubstantiation that the same genius seems requisite for either. It is fit the world should know how far reason abandons men that would employ it against religion; which intention, I hope, justifies this trouble from,

"SIR,

"Your hearty well-wisher,

"MISATHEUS."

The paper referred to is No. 3, the first reprinted here.—ED.]

Digitized by Google

# CONCERNING MOTION;

OR

# THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF MOTION,

AND

# THE CAUSE OF COMMUNICATING IT.

1721.

Digitized by Google

[EXCEPTING a short interval in 1714, Berkeley was abroad from 1713 to 1720 or 1721. In 1720 the Paris Academy of Sciences offered a prize for a treatise on the "Cause of Motion." This essay was probably begun with a thought of competition, but there is no proof that it was ever submitted. It was published in Latin in 1721, and reprinted in the "Miscellany" of 1752; but is here given as translated in Wright's edition of Berkeley. Its importance in the consideration of Berkeley's philosophy is greater than its meagre dimensions would seem to imply. It is a continuation of his three early philosophical works, but more closely reasoned and less exuberant than any of those. (See the Essay on Vision, the Treatise on Knowledge, and the Dialogues on Matter, *passim*, vol. i. of this edition.) Berkeley's chief philosophical bugbears. —Abstraction, and the Powers of Matter—are again attacked: for the essay may be summed up shortly as a protest against any attempt to consider (i.) Motion abstracted from Matter, (ii.) Matter as possessing any inherent cause of Motion.]

Digitized by Google

# CONCERNING MOTION.

1.

IT is of main import in searching for knowledge to take care that ill understood terms do not thwart us, a point which almost all philosophers inculcate, yet few attend to. Although it does not appear so difficult, especially in physical researches, which allow sensation, experiment, and geometrical reasoning. Laying aside, therefore, every prejudice originating either in usual modes of speaking, or in the authority of philosophers, we should diligently examine nature itself. Nor should the authority of any one be of such avail, that his words and expressions should be considered of value, unless they contain what is certain and clear.

2. The consideration of motion amazingly disturbed the minds of ancient philosophers, whence arose various opinions excessively difficult, not to say absurd, which, since they have now sunk into obscurity, do not deserve that we should give much attention to their discussion. But amongst recent and sounder philosophers of the present age, when motion is treated of, several words of too abstract and obscure signification occur, such as, "solicitation of gravity," "effort," "dead powers," and which diffuse obscurity over writings, in other respects of great learning, and give rise to opinions not less at variance with truth, than with the common sense of men. But it is necessary that these be discussed, not for the sake of confuting others, but on account of truth.

3. Solicitation and effort, or endeavour, in strict acceptation, are applicable merely to animated beings. When they are applied to others, they should be received in a metaphorical sense. Philosophers, however, have nothing to do with metaphors. But if we reject affection of the soul

Digitized by Google

and motion of body, it will be clear to any one giving attention to the thing, that there is no distinct or plain meaning in those words.

4. As long as heavy bodies are sustained by us, we perceive in ourselves effort, fatigue, trouble; we also perceive in heavy bodies, when falling, an accelerated motion towards the centre of the earth, but nothing more, as far as our senses are concerned. However reason proves that there is some origin, or cause, of these phenomena, and this is generally called gravity. Since, however, the cause of the descent of heavy bodies is dark and unknown, gravity in that sense cannot be styled a sensible quality; consequently it is an occult quality. But we can scarcely conceive, and indeed not even scarcely, what is an occult quality, and how any quality can act or effect any thing. It would be better then, if, putting the occult quality out of view, men would attend only to sensible effects; and abstract words, however useful they are in discussions, being omitted in speculation, the mind should be fixed on particular and concrete things, that is, on the things themselves.

5. Power in the same way is attributed to bodies, but that word is used as if it signified a known quality, distinct as well from figure, motion, and every thing sensible, as from every affection of animated life; but any person who accurately examines the subject will find that it is nothing else than an occult quality. Animal effort and corporeal motion are commonly regarded as symptoms and measures of this occult quality.

6. Thus it is plain that gravity or power is erroneously laid down as the origin of motion: for can that origin be more clearly known from its being called an occult quality? What is itself occult, explains nothing; putting out of view that the unknown acting cause can be better styled a substance than a quality. Moreover, power, gravity, and words of that kind, are employed more usually, and that not injudiciously, in the concrete, to denote the motion of bodies, the difficulty in resistance, &c.; but when they are used by philosophers to signify natures distinct and abstracted from all these, which are neither objects of sense, nor can be figured by any power of mind or imagination, they are sure to produce error and confusion.

Digitized by Google

7. But it leads many into error, that they find general and abstract words useful in disquisition, yet they cannot fully assign them a meaning. Indeed, they have been partly invented by common usage to abbreviate language, and have been partly devised by philosophers for the purposes of instruction; not that they are according to the nature of things, which indeed are singular and concrete, but because they are fit for communicating learning, because they render notions, or at least propositions, general.

8. We generally suppose that corporeal power is something easily conceived. Those who have given more attention to the subject think otherwise, as appears from the amazing obscurity of their expressions when they attempt to explain it. Torricelli says, that power and impulse are certain abstract and subtle things and quintessences, which are included in corporeal substance, as in the magic vase of Circe.[1] Leibnitz also, in treating of natural force, has this passage: "Active, primitive power, which is ἡ πρώτη ἐντελέχεια, corresponds to soul or substantial form." See "Acta Erudit. Lips." Thus must even the greatest men, when they give way to abstraction, have recourse to words having no certain signification, and indeed mere scholastic shadows. We might bring forward other instances, and indeed no few of them, from the writings of recent authors, from which it is very clear, that metaphysical abstractions have not altogether given way to mechanics and experiment, but still give unnecessary trouble to philosophy.

9. From this source spring various absurdities, of which kind is this, that the force of percussion, however small, is infinitely great. Which indeed supposes that gravity is a substantial quality different from all others, and that gravitation is, as it were, an act of this quality substantially distinct from motion, but the least percussion produces a greater effect than the greatest gravitation without motion, for that causes some motion, this none. Whence it follows that the force of percussion exceeds in an infinite ratio the force of

[1] Matter is nothing but an enchanted vase of Circe, which serves for a receptacle of the force and the momenta of impulse. Power and impulse are such subtle abstracts, are quintessences so refined, that they cannot be enclosed in any other vessels but the inmost materiality of natural solids. See Academical Lectures.

Digitized by Google

gravitation, that is, must be infinitely great. The experiments of Galileo should be consulted, and what Torricelli, Borelli, and others, have written concerning the definite force of percussion.

10. However it must be admitted, that no power can be by itself perceived, nor otherwise known, nor measured, than by its effect. But there is no effect of dead power, or simple gravity in a quiescent body, no change taking place, but there is some effect of percussion. Since, therefore, powers are proportionable to effects, we may conclude that there is no such thing as dead power. Nor still, that the power of percussion is infinite, for we ought not to regard any positive quantity as infinite, because it surpasses in an infinite ratio no quantity or nothing.

11. The force of gravity cannot be discriminated from momentum; but there is no momentum without velocity, for it is quantity of matter multiplied into velocity, and as velocity cannot be understood without motion, neither can the force of gravitation. Still further, no power can be known unless by action, and is measured by the same, but we cannot abstract the action of a body from motion; therefore, as long as a heavy body changes the figure of a piece of lead placed under it, or of a cord, so long is it moved; but, as long as it is quiescent, it does nothing, or, what is the same, is prevented from acting. Briefly, those words *dead power* and *gravitation*, although by metaphysical abstraction they are supposed to mean something different from what moves, from what is moved, from motion and rest, yet all this is nothing whatsoever.

12. If any one would say that a weight, whether hung or laid on a chord, acted on it in preventing its resuming its position by elasticity, I say that, by parity of reason, any lower body acts on the higher lying on it, because it prevents it from descending; but it can by no means be styled the action of a body, that it prevents another body to exist in the place which it occupies.

13. We occasionally feel the pressure of a gravitating body; but the annoying sensation results from the motion of that heavy body communicated to the fibres and nerves of our bodies, and changing their position, and consequently should be referred to percussion. In these things we encounter

Digitized by Google

many and weighty prejudices; but they must be subdued by earnest and repeated thought, or, rather, totally extirpated.

14. To prove that any quantity is infinite, it should be shown that some finite homogeneous part is infinitely contained in it. But dead power is to the force of percussion, not as a part to a whole, but as a point to a line, according to those who maintain the infinite power of percussion. I might add much on this topic, but I fear to become prolix.

15. The principles laid down will put an end to some extraordinary disputes which have greatly engaged the attention of learned men. An example of these is that controversy concerning the proportion of powers. One side admitting that the quantity of matter being given, the momentum, motion, force, are directly as the velocity. But every one perceives that this opinion takes for granted that the force of a body is distinguished from its momentum, motion, and impulse; and that, that supposition being given up, it falls to the ground.

16. That it may appear still more clearly that a certain strange confusion has been introduced by metaphysical abstractions into the doctrine of motion, let us note how widely learned men differ in their opinions concerning power and impetus. Borelli asserts that impetus is nothing else than a degree of velocity. Some maintain that impetus and effort differ among themselves; others, that they do not differ. Some consider that the moving power is proportional to motion. Others maintain that there is some power besides the moving one, and which should be measured in a different manner, for instance, by the squares of the velocities into the quantities of matter. But there is no end in pursuing these things.

17. Force, gravity, attraction, and words of this sort, are serviceable for reasonings and computations concerning motion and bodies in motion, but not for understanding the simple nature of motion itself, or for denoting so many distinct qualities. Certainly, as far as regards attraction, it is clear that it is adopted by Newton, not as a real, physical quality, but merely as a mathematical hypothesis. Still further, Leibnitz, distinguishing elementary effort, or solicitation, from impetus, allows that those things are not in reality found in nature, but produced by abstraction.

Digitized by Google

18. Such also are the composition and resolution of any direct forces into any oblique ones, by the diagonal and sides of a parallelogram. These are serviceable for mechanics and computation; but it is one thing to be serviceable to computation and mathematics, and another to set forth the nature of things.

19. Of the moderns there are many of opinion, that motion is not destroyed, nor produced anew, but that there is always the same quantity of motion. Aristotle, also, proposed that question, whether motion be created and corrupt, or from eternity. That sensible motion perishes is plain from our senses; but they will have it that the same impetus, effort, or the same sum of forces, remains. Whence Borelli maintains, that force is not lessened in percussion, but expanded; also that contrary impulses are received and preserved in the same body. Leibnitz also maintains that effort is every where and always in matter. It must be allowed that these things are too abstract and obscure, and of the same sort as substantial forms and entelechiæ.

20. Those who, to explain the cause and origin of motion, make use either of the hylarchic principle, or the need of nature, or appetite, or, finally, natural instinct, should be deemed rather to have said something than to have thought any thing. Nor is there much difference between such persons and those [1] who suppose that the parts of the earth move themselves, or that spirits are implanted in them in the same way as are forms, and in this way assign the cause of the acceleration of heavy bodies falling; or he [2] who maintained that in bodies, besides solid extension, there should also be allowed something whence the consideration of forces might arise. For all these either lay down nothing particular and determinate, or, if there be anything in what they say, it will be as difficult to explain as that very thing on account of explaining which it is brought forward.

21. It is to no purpose for explaining nature, to bring forward what is neither open to the senses nor can be understood by the reason. We should consider, therefore, what the senses, what experience, what reason, resting on them, impresses on us. There are two chief sorts of things—body

[1] Borelli. [2] Leibnitz.

Digitized by Google

and mind. By the aid of our senses we perceive something extended, solid, moveable, having figure and other qualities, the objects of our senses; and, by some internal consciousness, we know of something sentient, perceptive, and intelligent. Moreover, we perceive that these things differ widely from each other, and are thoroughly heterogeneous. I am speaking of things that are known; we need say nothing of things unknown.

22. That which we know and call body, in no respect contains any thing in itself which can be the origin or efficient cause of motion; for impenetrability, extension, figure, include or denote no power of producing motion; nay, on the contrary, examining singly not only those but other qualities of bodies, we shall find all their qualities passive, and that there is nothing in them active, and which can in any way be regarded as the source and origin of motion. As to gravity, we have shown that word to signify nothing known or distinct from the sensible effect the cause of which is the object of inquiry; and, indeed, when we call a body heavy, we understand nothing more than that it tends downwards, not regarding the cause of this sensible effect.

23. We can, therefore, without hesitation, state respecting body, that it is not the origin of motion. Wherefore, if any one maintains, that, in addition to solid extension and its modifications, the word body implies occult virtue, form, essence, he may with vain toil dispute without notions, and indulge in an abuse of words which express nothing distinctly. But the wiser course of philosophers would have been, to have abstained altogether from abstract and general notions; if, indeed, notions which cannot be understood ought to be expressed at all.

24. We know what is contained in the idea of body; but what we know in body it is clear is not the origin of motion. But those who attribute to body something unknown, of which they have no idea, and which they call the origin of motion: such persons say nothing more than that the origin of motion is unknown. But we need no longer dwell on such subtleties.

25. Besides corporeal beings, there is another class, that of thinking beings. That these have a power of moving bodies, we know by our own experience; since our minds can at pleasure excite and stop the movements of our limbs,

Digitized by Google

however it is effected. This is certain, that our bodies are moved at the will of our minds, which consequently may not improperly be styled the origin of motion; a particular and subordinate one, indeed, and which itself depends on the first universal origin.

26. Heavy bodies tend downwards, although agitated by no apparent impulse. We must not, however, therefore suppose that the origin of motion resides in them; on which fact Aristotle thus reasons:—Heavy and light things, he observes, are not moved of themselves; for that would be vitality, and they could stop themselves. All heavy bodies tend to the centre of the earth, by a certain and constant law; nor is there perceived any principle or power of stopping or diminishing that motion, or of increasing it, except by a fixed proportion, or of in any way modifying it; consequently, their condition is merely passive. Moreover, the same thing should, strictly and accurately speaking, be said respecting percussive bodies. Those bodies, as long as they are moved, and also in the very moment of percussion, are as much passive as when they are at rest. A body at rest acts as much as a body in motion; as Newton admits, when he says that the force of *inertia* is the same with *impetus*. But an inert body does nothing; so neither does a body moved.

27. In reality, a body equally persists in each state, either of rest or of motion. But its doing so can no more be called an action of body, than its existence can be called its action. Its persevering is nothing more than a continuation in the same mode of existence, which cannot properly be called action. But the resistance which we experience in stopping a body in motion, we make out to be an action of it; but this is a delusion. For, in reality, that resistance which we perceive is an impression in ourselves; nor does it prove that body acts, but that we have an impression; and it is plain that we should have the same impression whether the body were moved by itself, or were impelled by some other principle.

28. Action and reaction are said to be in bodies; and such expressions are convenient for mechanical demonstrations. But we should be on our guard not therefore to suppose in them some real virtue which may be the cause or

Digitized by Google

origin of motion. For those words are to be understood in the same way as the word attraction; and as this last is merely a mathematical hypothesis, and not a physical quality, the same should be understood concerning those, and for the same reason. For as truth, and the use of theorems concerning the mutual attraction of bodies remain unshaken in mechanical philosophy, as founded on the motion of bodies, whether that motion may be supposed by the action of bodies mutually attracting each other, or by the action of some agent different from body, impelling and stopping bodies; for the same reason, whatsoever things have been laid down concerning the rules and laws of motion, and the theorems deduced from them, remain unquestionable, provided the sensible effects and reasonings depending on them be admitted.

29. Let extension, solidity, figure, be taken away from the idea of body, nothing will remain; but these qualities are indifferent to motion, nor have they any thing in them which can be styled the origin. This is clear from our ideas themselves. If, therefore, by the word body be signified that which we conceive, it is quite clear that the origin of motion cannot be implied, for no part or attribute of it is a real, efficient cause, which can produce motion. But to use a word, and attach no idea to it, is in truth unworthy of a philosopher.

30. We find that there is a thinking, active being, which we learn, from experience, to be the origin of motion, in us. This we style soul, mind, spirit. We find that there is also a being extended, inert, moveable; which differs altogether from the other, and constitutes a new class. Anaxagoras, a man of great sagacity, who first perceived the difference between thinking and extended being, asserted that mind had nothing in common with body, as appears from the first book of Aristotle on the Mind. Among the moderns, Descartes also, has very well laid this down. Some, after him, have made this plain truth confused and difficult by their obscure expressions.

31. It is clear from what we have laid down, that those who affirm that active power, action, the origin of motion, are actually in body, maintain an opinion unsupported by experience; that they prop it up by obscure and general



Digitized by Google

terms, nor do they completely understand themselves. They, on the contrary, who maintain that mind is the origin of motion, express an opinion supported by their own experience, and confirmed by the opinion of the most learned men in all ages.

32. Anaxagoras first had recourse to mind (τὸν νοῦν), as that which impressed motion on inert matter. Which opinion Aristotle also maintains and confirms by many arguments, justly asserting that the first mover is immoveable, indivisible, and has no magnitude. To say that every thing producing motion must be moveable, he rightly maintains, is as if a person would maintain that every thing which builds must be capable of being built, Physics, lib. viii. Plato also, in Timæus, lays it down, that this material machine, or the visible world, is moved and animated by a mind which evades all sensation. Still further, the Cartesians of the present day acknowledge God as the origin of motion. Newton, also, everywhere intimates, by no means obscurely, that motion not only originally proceeds from the Deity, but that still the mundane system is kept in motion by His power. This agrees with scripture, and is confirmed by the calculations of the learned. For although the Peripatetics lay it down that nature is the origin of motion and rest, they interpret it to be the Deity acting as motion. For they understand that all the bodies of this mundane system are moved by an all-powerful mind, according to a certain and constant reason.

33. But those who attribute a vital principle to bodies, devise something obscure and ill agreeing with reality. For what else is being endowed with vital principle than to live; or to live, than to move itself, stop, and change its state? Now the philosophers of the present day lay it down as an indisputable principle, that every body perseveres in its state, either of rest or of uniform rectilinear motion, unless so far as it is from some external cause compelled to change that state; on the contrary, in mind, we perceive a power of changing its own state, as well as that of other beings, which is called vital, and fully distinguishes mind from body.

34. The moderns consider motion and rest in bodies as two states of existence, in each of which every body naturally would remain inert, unless external force impelled it. Whence

Digitized by Google

we may say that the cause of motion and rest is the same as that of the existence of body, for it does not seem that we should look out for any cause of the successive existence of body in different parts of space, than that whence results the successive existence of body in different parts of time. But to treat of the God Almighty and All Good, the Creator and Preserver of all things, and in what manner all things depend on the supreme and true Being, although the most exalted branch of human learning, belongs rather to primary philosophy, or metaphysics and theology, than to natural philosophy, which at present is almost completely restricted to experiments and mechanics. Therefore natural philosophy either presupposes a knowledge of the Deity, or derives it from some science of a higher order. Although it is most true that the investigation of nature every where affords excellent arguments to the higher sciences, for illustrating and proving the wisdom, goodness, and power of God.

35. This not being sufficiently understood is the reason why some unadvisedly regret the mathematical principles of physics on that ground, that they do not assign efficient causes of things; when, in truth, it appertains to physics or mechanics to state the rules only of impulse and attraction, and not the efficient causes, in a word, the laws of motion; and from these, when received, to assign the solution of particular phenomena, but not their efficient cause.

36. It will be of great use to consider what origin properly is, and in what sense it must be taken amongst philosophers. Now the true, efficient, and preserving cause of all things is most properly called their source and origin. But the word *principia*, when applied to experimental philosophy, properly signifies the grounds on which it rests, or the sources from which is derived (I do not say the existence, but) the knowledge of material beings, these grounds being sensation and experience. In the same way, in mechanical philosophy, we mean by *principia* that constituting the grounds and extent of the whole science; being those primary laws of motion which, confirmed by experiment, are cultivated and rendered universal by reason. These laws of motion are appropriately called *principia*, principles, since from them are derived as well the general theorems of mechanics as the particular explanations of phenomena.

Digitized by Google

37. Then truly something can be said to be explained mechanically when it is reduced to those most simple and universal principles, and is by accurate reasoning shown to be suitable and connected with them. For the laws of nature being once ascertained, it remains for the philosopher to show that each thing necessarily follows in conformity with these laws; that is, that every phenomenon necessarily results from the principles. This is to explain and solve the phenomena; that is to assign the reason why they take place.

38. The human mind delights in extending and enlarging its knowledge. But for this purpose general notions and propositions must be formed, in which, in some way or other, are comprised particular propositions and facts; which are then considered to be understood when they are deduced from them by continued consequence. This is well known to geometricians. In mechanics, also, the course is, first, to lay down notions; that is, definitions and elementary and general positions concerning motion; from which subsequently, in the mathematical style, more remote and less general conclusions are drawn. And, as by the application of geometrical theorems the magnitudes of particular bodies are measured, so by the application of the general theorems of mechanics we ascertain and determine the motions of any parts of the mundane system, and the phenomena depending on them; and this the investigator of physics should exclusively aim at.

39. And as geometricians, for the sake of practice, devise many things which they neither themselves can contrive nor find in the nature of things, for the same reason those who treat of mechanics employ certain abstract and general words, and assume power, action, attraction, solicitation, &c.; which are of the first utility for theories, enunciations, and computations concerning motion, although in actual truth and bodies really they are sought in vain, as much as are those things imagined by mathematical abstraction.

40. In reality, by the use of our senses we perceive nothing except effects or sensible qualities, and material beings in all respects passive, whether at rest or in motion: and reason and experience indicate nothing active except mind or soul; whatever is imagined more than this must be

Digitized by Google

regarded of the same sort as those mathematical hypotheses and abstractions; and we should thoroughly bear this in mind. Unless this take place we may easily relapse into the obscure subtlety of the schoolmen, which for so many ages infected philosophy like a dreadful plague.

41. The mechanical principles and universal laws of motion, or of nature, happily discovered in the last century, and treated of and applied by the aid of geometry, have thrown a wonderful light on philosophy. But the metaphysical principles, and the real efficient causes of motion, and of the existence of bodies, and the attributes of bodies, by no means belong to mechanics or experiments; nor can they throw light on them, except this far, that known previously, they may serve to define the limits of physics, and thus to do away with difficulties and questions which are foreign to them.

42. Those who derive the origin of motion from spirit, understand by the name either a corporeal or incorporeal being. If they understand a corporeal being, however subtle, the difficulty recurs; but if an incorporeal, however true may be their opinion, it does not properly belong to physics. Wherefore, if any extend natural philosophy beyond the limits of experiments and mechanics, so that it embraces the knowledge of immaterial, unextended things, the wider extent of the word admits the treating of soul and mind, or the vital principle. But it will be more commodious, according to the usage now generally received, to distinguish between sciences; so that each be circumscribed by proper limits, and the natural philosopher be entirely engaged in experiments on the laws of motion, and in mechanical principles, and the reasonings deduced from them; but what he may bring forward concerning other things he should consider the offspring of a more exalted science. For from the knowledge of the laws of nature the most beautiful theories, as well as mechanical processes useful to life, proceed; but from knowledge concerning the Author of nature himself arise speculations unquestionably of the highest order, but metaphysical, moral, and theological.

43. So far concerning the principles, we must now treat of the nature, of motion. And it, indeed, since it is clearly perceived by the senses, has been obscured not so much by

Digitized by Google

its own nature, as by the learned conjectures of philosophers. Motion never is presented to our senses without material mass, space, and time. There are some, however, who try to contemplate motion as a certain simple and abstract idea, and abstracted from all other things. But that very subtle and fine-drawn idea evades the acuteness of our intellects, as any one can experience by meditation. Hence result great difficulties concerning the nature of motion, and definitions more obscure than the thing which they are intended to explain. Such is that of Aristotle and the schoolmen, who say that motion is the act of what is moveable, as far as it is moveable; or the acting of a being in power as far as it is in power. Such is that also of a celebrated author of later times,[1] who asserts that there is nothing real in motion except that momentary thing which ought to be comprised in power struggling for a change. Moreover, it is plain that the authors of these and of similar definitions have bent their minds on explaining the abstract nature of motion, laying aside all consideration of time and place; but how that abstract quintessence of motion, as I may call it, can be understood, I cannot perceive.

44. Nor are they content with this; but they go further, and separate and discriminate from each other the parts of motion, the distinct ideas of which they attempt to form, as of beings really distinct; for there are some who distinguish motion from movement, regarding the former as the instantaneous element of movement. Still further; they regard velocity, effort, force, impetus, as many things differing essentially, each of which is presented to the intellect by a peculiar idea, distinct and abstracted from all others. But if what we have before treated of be admitted, we need spend no more time in these discussions.

45. Many also define motion by means of transition, not recollecting that transition itself cannot be understood without motion, and ought to be defined by means of motion. So true is it, that definitions which throw light on some things, cause darkness in others. And, indeed, whatever we perceive by our senses, scarcely any one can make better known or more clear by definitions. Allured by the vain hope

[1] Newton.—Ed.

Digitized by Google

of which, philosophers have made the easiest things most difficult; and have entangled their minds in difficulties which they have themselves, for the most part, caused. From this desire of defining, as well as of abstracting, many questions at once both subtle and useless, which have arisen both concerning motion and other things, have fruitlessly racked men's minds; so that Aristotle freely, on many occasions, confesses that motion is some act difficult to be known; and some of the ancients became so hackneyed in these trifles that they altogether denied the existence of motion.

46. But it is grievous to be detained by trifles of this kind. Let it suffice to show the sources of the solutions, and to add, that all the paradoxes and thorny theories (such, for instance, as those which treat of infinites) which have been introduced into mathematics, concerning the unlimited division of time and space, have been introduced into the definitions concerning motion; but all things of that kind motion has in common with time and space, or rather refers to them.

47. Still further, as the too great division or abstraction of things in reality inseparable, so on the other hand the combination, or rather confusion, of things most different, has rendered the nature of motion perplexed. For it is usual to confound motion with the efficient cause of motion. Whence motion is as it were twofold; having one face obvious to our senses, the other wrapped in dark night. Hence result obscurity, confusion, and various paradoxes concerning motion. Whilst that is rashly attributed to effect, which in reality can belong only to cause.

48. Hence arises the opinion, that the same quantity of motion is always kept up, which any one must know to be false, unless it be understood concerning the force or power of the cause, whether that cause be termed nature or νοῦς, or whatever sort of agent it may be. Aristotle, in the eighth book of his Physics, where he inquires whether motion be created and corrupt, or be in all things from eternity as an immortal life, seems to have understood rather a vital principle, than an external effect or change of place.

49. Hence it is that many think that motion is not a merely passive quality of body. If this mean what is presented to our senses in the case of motion, no one can doubt that it is altogether passive; for what is there in the successive

Digitized by Google

existence of body in various places that has any thing to do with action, or can be any thing but mere inert effect?

50. The Peripatetics, who maintain that motion is one act of two beings, of the mover and of the moved, do not sufficiently distinguish cause from effect. In the same way, those who imagine endeavour or effort in motion, or think that the same body is impelled towards different parts, seem to sport with the same confusion of ideas, the same ambiguity of words.

51. It is of great use, as in all other things, so in science, to investigate accurately about motion, as well for understanding the opinions of others, as for accurately enunciating our own; and unless there be some fault in this respect, I scarcely think that a dispute can be raised, whether body be indifferent to motion and rest, or not. For since it is clear from experience, that it is a primary law of nature that a body should persevere in a state of motion or of rest as long as nothing occurs from another quarter to change that state, and therefore it may be concluded that the inert quality is in different respects either resistance or impetus: in this sense certainly body can be said to be indifferent as to rest or motion. For it is as difficult to cause rest in a moving body, as to cause motion in a body at rest; but when a body equally preserves either state, why should it not be said to be indifferently circumstanced as to both?

52. But the Peripatetics, according to the variety of the changes which any body can undergo, distinguished various kinds of motion. Those who at present treat the subject take into account only local motion. But local motion cannot be understood, unless we also understand the meaning of *place*, which is by the moderns defined to be the part of space which body occupies, and therefore in reference to space it is divided into absolute and relative. For they distinguish between absolute and true space, and that which is apparent or relative. They maintain indeed that there exists in every direction an immense immoveable space, not the object of sensation, but pervading and embracing all bodies, and this they call absolute space. But the space comprehended or marked out by body, and so subjected to our senses, is called relative, apparent, common space.

53. Let us then imagine all bodies to be destroyed and

Digitized by Google

annihilated. What then remains they call absolute space, all relation resulting from the situation and distances of bodies, as well as the bodies themselves, being done away with. Now this space is infinite, immoveable, indivisible, not the object of sensation, without relation and without distinction. That is, all its attributes are privative or negative; therefore it seems to be a mere nothing. The only difficulty results from its being extended, for extension is a positive quality. But what sort of extension is that, which can be neither divided nor measured, no part of which we can either perceive by our senses, or figure in the imagination? for nothing can enter the imagination which from the nature of the thing is not possible to be perceived by sensation, since imagination is nothing else than a faculty representing the objects of sensation, either existing in act, or at least being possible. It also evades pure intellect, since that faculty is only conversant about spiritual and unextended things, such as our minds, their habits, passions, virtues, and such things. Let us, then, take away mere words from absolute space, and nothing remains in sensation, imagination, or intellect; nothing, therefore, is denoted by them but mere privation or negation, that is, mere nothing.

54. It must be allowed, that with respect to this subject, we are entangled with the greatest prejudices, to free ourselves from which we must exert the whole vigour of our minds; for many are so far from considering absolute space as a non-entity, that they think it the only thing, except God, which cannot be annihilated; and maintain that it necessarily exists by its own nature, and is eternal and uncreated, and consequently participates in the divine attributes. But since it is most certain that every thing which we denote by names is in some respect known by qualities and relations (for it would be silly to make use of words having no known thing, no notion, no idea or conception attached), let us diligently inquire whether we can form any idea of that pure, real, absolute space, which would continue to exist after the annihilation of all body. Examining such an idea accurately, I find it to be the most perfect idea of nothing, if it can be called an idea. This has been the case with me after I have used all my diligence; and I think that others will find the same if they use the same diligence.

Digitized by Google

55. It sometimes is wont to lead us astray, that all other bodies being in imagination done away with, we suppose that our own bodies remain; and supposing this, we imagine the freest motion of our limbs in every direction. But motion cannot be conceived without space. Still if we consider the matter more attentively, it is clear, 1st, that we conceive relative space marked out by the parts of our body; 2nd, a free power of moving our limbs, checked by nothing, and nothing besides this. However, we erroneously suppose that some other thing, called infinite space, really exists, which allows us free power of moving our bodies; for nothing more than the absence of other bodies is required for this. Which absence or privation of body we must allow to be nothing positive.[1]

56. But unless these things be freely and closely examined, words and sounds are but of little avail. Now it will be clear to any one attentively considering, that whatever is predicated of pure space may be predicated of nothing. By which means the human mind is easily freed from great difficulties; and, at the same time, of attributing necessary existence to any being except the almighty and all-good God alone.

57. It were easy to confirm our opinion by arguments derived *à posteriori*, as it is called, by proposing questions concerning absolute space for instance, whether it be a substance or an accident, whether created or uncreated, and pointing out the absurdities resulting from either position. But I must be brief. It, however, ought not to be omitted, that Democritus formerly confirmed this opinion by his support, as Aristotle mentions in Physics, lib. i., where he has this passage, "Democritus lays down as principles, solidity and void, of which he says, that the one is as that which is, the other is as that which is not." But if any one would raise a doubt, that the distinction between absolute and relative space is admitted by great philosophers, and that many famous theorems are founded on that ground, it will appear from what follows, that such a ground is vain.

58. From what has been laid down, it is plain that it is not consistent that we should define the true place of a body to be that part of absolute space which the body occupies,

[1] See what has been urged against absolute space in the book concerning the "Principles of Human Knowledge," sect. 116.

Digitized by Google

and true or absolute motion to be the change of true and absolute place; since all place is relative, as well as all motion. But that this may appear more clearly it should be observed, that no motion can be understood without some direction or determination, which, indeed, cannot be understood unless, besides the body that is moved, our bodies also, or some other thing, be understood to exist: for upwards, downwards, to the left, to the right, and all places and regions, are founded in something relative, and necessarily imply some body distinct from that which is moved; so that if all other bodies were annihilated, and only one, a globe for instance, were supposed to exist, no motion could be conceived in it: so necessary is it that some body be given, by the situation of which motion can be determined. The truth of that opinion will most clearly appear, if we form a clear notion of the annihilation of all bodies, as well our own as others, except that globe.

59. Moreover, let there be two globes imagined, and nothing corporeal besides. Let it then be imagined that forces are in some way applied: whatsoever we may understand by the application of forces, a circular motion of the two globes about a common centre cannot be conceived in imagination. Let us suppose then, the heavens of fixed stars to be created immediately; motion will be conceived from the conceived course of the globes to different parts of that heaven. For since motion is in its nature relative, it cannot be conceived before that correlative bodies be given, as also no other relation can be conceived without correlatives.

60. As to circular motion, many think that true circular motion increasing, a body tends more and more to recede from the axis. But this results from that circumstance, because, since circular motion can be regarded as every moment resulting from two directions, one that of the radius, the other that of the tangent, if the force be increased in this last direction, then the body in motion will recede from the centre, but the orbit will cease to be circular. But if the forces be equally increased in both directions, the circular motion will continue, but accelerated; which will prove that the forces, both of receding from the axis and of approaching it, are increased. It must therefore be said that water,

Digitized by Google

whirled round in a bucket, mounts up the side of the vessel, because, fresh forces being applied to each particle of water in the direction of the tangent in the same instant, fresh centripetal forces are not applied. From which experiment it by no means follows, that the absolute circular motion is necessarily indicated by the forces of the motion receding from the axis. Moreover, how we should understand the words forces and efforts of bodies appears plainly from what has been already written.

61. In the same way as a curve may be considered as consisting of an infinite number of right lines, although not in reality consisting of them, but because the hypothesis is serviceable for geometry, so a circular motion may be regarded as resulting from an infinity of rectilineal directions, an hypothesis useful in mechanical philosophy. It is not, however, to be maintained, that it is impossible that the centre of gravity of each body may successively exist in each point of the periphery of a circle, no account being taken of any rectilineal direction, either in the tangent or in the radius.

62. It should not be omitted, that the motion of a stone in a sling, or of water whirled round in a bucket, cannot be called a really circular motion, according to the notion of those who define the true limits of body by the parts of absolute space, since it is wonderfully compounded of the motions, not only of the sling or bucket, but of the diurnal motion of the earth round its axis, its monthly motion round the common centre of gravity of the earth and moon, and its annual round the sun; on account of which every particle of the stone or water describes a line very widely differing from a circular one. Neither, in reality, is that, as it is supposed, an axifugal tendency, since it does not regard any one axis with reference to absolute space, if the existence of absolute space be admitted; so I do not see how it can be called a single tendency, to which a motion, truly circular, corresponds as to its proper and adequate effect.

63. No motion can be perceived or measured except by what is the object of sensation. Since, therefore, absolute space is not obvious to our senses, it must be of no avail for distinguishing. Besides, determination or direction is essential to motion; but that consists in relation; therefore it is impossible to conceive absolute motion.

Digitized by Google

64. Moreover, since according to the difference of relative place, the motion of the same body may be various, and indeed a body may be said to be moved in one respect, and motionless in another; for determining true motion and true rest, for the purpose of removing ambiguity and advancing the mechanical philosophy of those who contemplate the system of things in a more enlarged way, it will be sufficient, instead of absolute space, to regard relative space as marked out by the heavens of the fixed stars considered as at rest. But motion and rest, marked out by such relative space, can be conveniently used instead of the absolute, which can by no distinction be discriminated from them. For howsoever forces may be impressed, whatever tendencies there may be, let us admit that motion is distinguished by means of action on bodies, it will, however never follow from thence, that there are absolute space and place, and that its change is the true place.

65. The laws and effects of motion, and theorems containing their proportions and calculations, according to their different courses, also their accelerations and different directions, and mediums of more or less resistance; all these come out without the calculation of absolute motion. As is plain from this, that according to the principles of those who bring forward absolute motion, it cannot be known by any symptom, whether the whole frame of things rests or is moved uniformly in direction; it is clear that the absolute motion of no body can be known.

66. From what has been said, it appears, that to ascertain the true nature of motion, it will be of great avail, 1st, to distinguish between mathematical hypotheses, and the nature of things; 2nd, to beware of abstractions; 3rd, to consider motion as something, the object of sensation, or at least of imagination; and to be content with relative measures: which if we do, at the same time the finest theorems of mechanical philosophy, by means of which the recesses of nature are disclosed, and the system of the world subjected to human calculation, will remain uninjured, and the consideration of motion freed from a thousand minute subtleties and abstractions. And let it suffice to say so much concerning the nature of motion.

67. It remains that we should treat of the cause of the

Digitized by Google

communication of motion. But most consider, that force impressed on a moveable body is the cause of motion in it. Nevertheless it results from what has been laid down, that they do not assign a known cause of motion, and distinct from body and motion. It is further clear, that force is not a thing certain and determinate, from the circumstance, that men of the greatest powers of mind advance different, and even contrary things, though retaining truth in the consequences. For Newton says, that force impressed consists in action alone, and is an action exercised on body to change its state, nor that it continues after. Torricelli contends that a certain accumulation or aggregation of forces impressed by percussion, is received into the moved body and remains there, and constitutes the impetus; Borelli and some others maintain the same. But although Newton and Torricelli seem to differ, each advancing things consistent with themselves, the matter is well enough explained by both. For forces attributed to bodies are as much mathematical hypotheses as attractive powers assigned to the planets and sun. Mathematical things, however, have no stable essence in nature, but depend on the notion of the definer, whence the same thing can be differently explained.

68. Let us lay it down, that the new motion is preserved in the struck body, either by innate force, by which any body continues in its state of motion or rest, uniformly in direction; or by force impressed, and during the impression received into the struck body, and there remaining; it will be the same as to reality, the difference existing only in name. In like manner, when the striking body loses, and the struck acquires motion, it is little to the purpose to dispute whether the motion acquired be numerically the same with that lost; for it leads us into metaphysical and verbal disputes concerning identity; therefore, whether we say that motion passes from the striking body into the struck, or that motion is generated anew in the struck body and destroyed in the striking, it amounts to the same thing. In each instance it is meant that one body acquires motion and another loses it, and nothing more.

69. That the intelligence which moves and embraces this whole corporeal mass, and is the efficient cause of motion, is strictly and properly speaking the cause of the communication

Digitized by Google

of the same, I will not deny. However, in physical philosophy we ought to deduce the causes and solutions of phenomena from mechanical principles. The thing is explained physically, not by assigning the really acting and immaterial cause, but by demonstrating its connexion with mechanical principles. Of that kind is that, that action and reaction are always contrary and equal, from which, as from a primary principle and source, are deduced the rules concerning the communication of motion, which have been ascertained and demonstrated by moderns to the great benefit of science.

70. Let it suffice us to hint that that principle can be declared in another way. For if the true nature of things, rather than abstract mathematics, be regarded, it will seem to be more properly said, that in attraction or percussion, the passive rather than the active quality of bodies is equal. For instance, a stone tied by a rope to a horse is as much drawn towards the horse as the horse towards the stone. A moved body also dashed against another at rest suffers the same change with the quiescent body, and as to the real effect the striking body is also struck, the struck body striking. But the change in each instance, as well in the body of the horse as in the stone, in the body in motion and at rest, is a merely passive state. But it does not appear that there is a force, a virtue, or material action, really and properly causing such effects. A body in motion is dashed against one at rest; but we use an active mode of expression, saying, that the one impels the other, and not improperly in mechanics, where the mathematical rather than the actual causes of things are considered.

71. In physics, sensation and experience, which only reach apparent effects, are admitted; in mechanics, the abstract notions of mathematicians are admitted. In primary philosophy, or metaphysics, we treat of immaterial things, causes, truth, and the existence of things. The writer on physics contemplates the series or succession of the objects of sense, by what laws they are connected, and in what order; observing what precedes as a cause, what follows as an effect. And in this way we say that a moved body is the cause of motion in another, or impresses motion on it; also that it draws or impels. In which sense secondary corporeal causes

Digitized by Google

ought to be understood, no account being taken of the actual place of the forces, or active powers, or of the real cause in which they are. Moreover, beyond body, figure, motion, the primary axioms of mechanical science can be styled cause, or mechanical principles, being regarded as the causes of what follow them.

72. The truly active causes can be extracted only by meditation and reasoning from the shades in which they are involved, and thus at all become known. But it is the province of primary philosophy, or of metaphysics, to treat of them. Wherefore if its own province were assigned to each science, its limits marked out, its principles and objects accurately distinguished, we could treat of what belongs to each with greater facility and perspicuity.

Digitized by Google

# AN ESSAY

## TOWARDS

## PREVENTING THE RUIN OF GREAT BRITAIN.

1721.



Digitized by Google

[BERKELEY returned from abroad to find the country paralysed by the terrors of the South Sea disaster. To him it seemed that degeneration of morals and intellect was the root of this disaster, as of others rapidly ripening; and we find him devoting with peculiar eagerness the next many years to ideas of social reform. A note of solemn warning is struck in this Essay, and the way of hope is shown. With occasional descents, it is a splendid composition, containing several passages that sound curiously oratorical. It was published in 1721, and republished in the "Miscellany" of 1752.]

Digitized by Google

AN

# ESSAY

Towards preventing the RUIN of

# *GREAT-BRITAIN.*

---

*Avaritia fidem, probitatem, cæteraſque artes bonas ſubvertit: pro his ſuperbiam, crudelitatem, deos negligere, omnia venalia habere, edocuit.*

SALLUST.

*Ii qui per largitionem magiſtratus adepti ſunt, dederunt operam ut ita poteſtatem gererent, ut illam lacunam rei familiaris explerent.*

CICERO.

*Omnes aut de honoribus ſuis, aut de præmiis pecuniæ, aut de perſequendis inimicis agebant.*

CÆSAR.

---

Firſt Printed in *London*, A. D. MDCCXXI.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

# AN ESSAY, &c.

WHETHER the prosperity that preceded, or the calamities that succeed the South Sea project have most contributed to our undoing is not so clear a point as it is that we are actually undone, and lost to all sense of our true interest. Nothing less than this could render it pardonable to have recourse to those old-fashioned trite maxims concerning Religion, Industry, Frugality, and Public Spirit, which are now forgotten, but, if revived and put in practice, may not only prevent our final ruin, but also render us a more happy and flourishing people than ever.

Religion hath in former days been cherished and reverenced by wise patriots and lawgivers, as knowing it to be impossible that a nation should thrive and flourish without virtue, or that virtue should subsist without conscience, or conscience without religion: insomuch that an atheist or infidel was looked on with abhorrence, and treated as an enemy to his country. But, in these wiser times, a cold indifference for the national religion, and indeed for all matters of faith and Divine worship, is thought good sense. It is even become fashionable to decry religion; and that little talent of ridicule is applied to such wrong purposes that a good Christian can hardly keep himself in countenance.

Liberty is the greatest human blessing that a virtuous man can possess, and is very consistent with the duties of a good subject and a good Christian. But the present age aboundeth with injudicious patrons of liberty, who, not distinguishing between that and licentiousness, take the surest method to discredit what they would seem to propagate. For, in effect, can there be a greater affront offered to that just freedom of thought and action which is the prerogative of a rational

Digitized by Google

creature, or can any thing recommend it less to honest minds, than under colour thereof to obtrude scurrility and profaneness on the world? But it hath been always observed of weak men, that they know not how to avoid one extreme without running into another.

Too many of this sort pass upon vulgar readers for great authors, and men of profound thought; not on account of any superiority either in sense or style, both which they possess in a very moderate degree, nor of any discoveries they have made in arts and sciences, which they seem to be little acquainted with; but purely because they flatter the passions of corrupt men, who are pleased to have the clamours of conscience silenced, and those great points of the Christian religion made suspected which withheld them from many vices of pleasure and interest, or made them uneasy in the commission of them.

In order to promote that laudable design of effacing all sense of religion from among us, they form themselves into assemblies, and proceed with united counsels and endeavours; with what success, and with what merit towards the public, the effect too plainly shews. I will not say these gentlemen have formed a direct design to ruin their country, or that they have the sense to see half the ill consequences which must necessarily flow from the spreading of their opinions; but the nation feels them, and it is high time the legislature put a stop to them.

I am not for placing an invidious power in the hands of the clergy, or complying with the narrowness of any mistaken zealots who should incline to persecute Dissenters. But, whatever conduct common sense, as well as Christian charity, obligeth us to use towards those who differ from us in some points of religion, yet the public safety requireth that the avowed contemners of all religion should be severely chastised; and perhaps it may be no easy matter to assign a good reason why blasphemy against God should not be inquired into and punished with the same rigour as treason against the king.

For, though we may attempt to patch up our affairs, yet it will be to no purpose; the finger of God will unravel all our vain projects, and make them snares to draw us into greater calamities, if we do not reform that scandalous libertinism

Digitized by Google

which (whatever some shallow men may think) is our worst symptom, and the surest prognostic of our ruin.

Industry is the natural sure way to wealth. This is so true that it is impossible an industrious free people should want the necessaries and comforts of life, or an idle enjoy them under any form of government. Money is so far useful to the public as it promoteth industry, and credit having the same effect is of the same value with money; but money or credit circulating through a nation from hand to hand, without producing labour and industry in the inhabitants, is direct gaming.

It is not impossible for cunning men to make such plausible schemes as may draw those who are less skilful into their own and the public ruin. But surely there is no man of sense and honesty but must see and own, whether he understands the game or not, that it is an evident folly for any people, instead of prosecuting the old honest methods of industry and frugality, to sit down to a public gaming-table, and play off their money one to another.

The more methods there are in a state for acquiring riches without industry or merit, the less there will be of either in that state; this is as evident as the ruin that attends it. Besides, when money is shifted from hand to hand in such a blind, fortuitous manner that some men shall from nothing in an instant acquire vast estates without the least deserts; while others are as suddenly stripped of plentiful fortunes, and left on the parish by their own avarice and credulity, what can be hoped for, on the one hand, but abandoned luxury and wantonness, or, on the other, but extreme madness and despair?

In short, all projects for growing rich by sudden and extraordinary methods, as they operate violently on the passions of men, and encourage them to despise the slow moderate gains that are to be made by an honest industry, must be ruinous to the public, and even the winners themselves will at length be involved in the public ruin.

It is an easy matter to contrive projects for the encouragement of industry: I wish it were as easy to persuade men to put them in practice. There is no country in Europe where there is so much charity collected for the poor, and

Digitized by Google

none where it is so ill managed. If the poor-tax was fixed at a medium in every parish, taken from a calculation of the last ten years, and raised for seven years by act of parliament, that sum (if the common estimate be not very wrong), frugally and prudently laid out in workhouses, would for ever free the nation from the care of providing for the poor, and at the same time considerably improve our manufactures. We might by these means rid our streets of beggars; even the children, the maimed, and the blind, might be put in a way of doing something for their livelihood. As for the small number of those who by age or infirmities are utterly incapable of all employment, they might be maintained by the labour of others; and the public would receive no small advantage from the industry of those who are now so great a burden and expense to it.

The same tax, continued three years longer, might be very usefully employed in making high roads, and rendering rivers navigable, two things of so much profit and ornament to a nation, that we seem the only people in Europe who have neglected them.[1] So that in the space of ten years the public may be for ever freed from a heavy tax, industry encouraged, commerce facilitated, and the whole country improved, and all this only by a frugal honest management, without raising one penny extraordinary.

The number of people is both means and motives to industry. It should therefore be of great use to encourage propagation, by allowing some reward or privilege to those who have a certain number of children; and, on the other hand, enacting that the public shall inherit half the unentailed estates of all who die unmarried of either sex.

Besides the immediate end proposed by the foregoing methods, they furnish taxes upon passengers, and dead bachelors, which are in no sort grievous to the subject, and may be applied towards clearing the public debt, which, all mankind agree, highly concerneth the nation in general, both court and country. Cæsar indeed mentions it as a piece of policy that he borrowed money from his officers to bestow it on the soldiers, which fixed both to his interest; and,

[1] This was published before turnpikes were erected.

Digitized by Google

though something like this may pass for skill at certain junctures in civil government, yet, if carried too far, it will prove a dangerous experiment.

There is still room for invention or improvement in most trades and manufactures, and it is probable, that premiums given on that account to ingenious artists, would soon be repaid a hundred-fold to the public. No colour is so much wore in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, as black; but our black cloth is neither so lasting, nor of so good a dye as the Dutch, which is the reason of their engrossing the profit of that trade. This is so true that I have known English merchants abroad wear black cloth of Holland themselves, and sell and recommend it as better than that of their own country. It is commonly said the water of Leyden hath a peculiar property for colouring black, but it hath been also said and passed current that good glasses may be made no where but at Venice, and there only in the island of Murano; which was attributed to some peculiar property in the air. And we may possibly find other opinions of that sort to be as groundless, should the legislature think it worth while to propose premiums in the foregoing, or in the like cases of general benefit to the public; but I remember to have seen, about seven years ago, a man pointed at in a coffee-house who (they said) had first introduced the right scarlet dye among us, by which the nation in general, as well as many private persons, have since been great gainers, though he was himself a beggar, who, if this be true, deserved an honourable maintenance from the public.

There are also several manufactures which we have from abroad that may be carried on to as great perfection here as elsewhere. If it be considered that more fine linen is wore in Great Britain than in any other country of Europe, it will be difficult to assign a reason why paper may not be made here as good, and in the same quantity, as in Holland, or France, or Genoa. This is a manufacture of great consumption, and would save much to the public. The like may be said of tapestry, lace, and other manufactures, which, if set on foot in cheap parts of the country, would employ many hands, and save money to the nation, as well as bring it from abroad. Projects for improving old manufactures, or setting up new ones, should not be despised in a trading

Digitized by Google

country, but the making them pretences for stock-jobbing hath been a fatal imposition.

As industry dependeth upon trade, and this, as well as the public security, upon our navigation, it concerneth the legislature to provide that the number of our sailors do not decrease; to which it would very much conduce, if a law were made prohibiting the payment of sailors in foreign parts; for it is usual with those on board merchant-men as soon as they set foot on shore to receive their pay, which is soon spent in riotous living; and when they have emptied their pockets, the temptation of a pistole present money never faileth to draw them into any foreign service. To this (if I may credit the information I have had from some English factors abroad) it is chiefly owing, that the Venetians, Spaniards, and others have so many English on board their ships. Some merchants indeed and masters of vessels may make a profit in defrauding those poor wretches, when they pay them in strange coin (which I have been assured often amounts to twelvepence in the crown), as well as in ridding themselves of the charge of keeping them when they sell their ships, or stay long in port; but the public lose both the money and the men, who, if their arrears were to be cleared at home, would be sure to return, and spend them in their own country. It is a shame this abuse should not be remedied.

Frugality of manners is the nourishment and strength of bodies politic. It is that by which they grow and subsist, until they are corrupted by luxury; the natural cause of their decay and ruin. Of this we have examples in the Persians, Lacedemonians, and Romans: not to mention many later governments which have sprung up, continued awhile, and then perished by the same natural causes. But these are, it seems, of no use to us; and, in spite of them, we are in a fair way of becoming ourselves another useless example to future ages.

Men are apt to measure national prosperity by riches. It would be righter to measure it by the use that is made of them. Where they promote an honest commerce among men, and are motives to industry and virtue, they are, without doubt, of great advantage; but where they are made (as too often happens) an instrument to luxury, they enervate

Digitized by Google

and dispirit the bravest people. So just is that remark of Machiavel, that there is no truth in the common saying, money is the nerves of war; and though we may subsist tolerably for a time among corrupt neighbours, yet if ever we have to do with a hardy, temperate, religious sort of men, we shall find, to our cost, that all our riches are but a poor exchange for that simplicity of manners which we despise in our ancestors. This sole advantage hath been the main support of all the republics that have made a figure in the world; and perhaps it might be no ill policy in a kingdom to form itself upon the manners of a republic.

Simplicity of manners may be more easily preserved in a republic than a monarchy; but if once lost may be sooner recovered in a monarchy, the example of a court being of great efficacy, either to reform or to corrupt a people; that alone were sufficient to discountenance the wearing of gold or silver, either in clothes or equipage, and if the same were prohibited by law, the saving so much bullion would be the smallest benefit of such an institution; there being nothing more apt to debase the virtue and good sense of our gentry of both sexes than the trifling vanity of apparel which we have learned from France, and which hath had such visible ill consequences on the genius of that people. Wiser nations have made it their care to shut out this folly by severe laws and penalties, and its spreading among us can forebode no good, if there be any truth in the observation of one of the ancients, that the direct way to ruin a man is to dress him up in fine clothes.

It cannot be denied that luxury of Dress giveth a light behaviour to our women, which may pass for a small offence, because it is a common one, but is in truth the source of great corruptions. For this very offence the prophet Isaiah denounced a severe judgment against the ladies of his time. I shall give the passage at length: "Moreover, the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet; therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and

Digitized by Google

their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the ear-rings, the rings and nose-jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping-pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods and the vails. And it shall come to pass that instead of a sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well-set hair, baldness, and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sack cloth; and burning instead of beauty." The scab, the stench, and the burning are terrible pestilential symptoms, and our ladies would do well to consider they may chance to resemble those of Zion in their punishment as well as their offence.

But dress is not the only thing to be reformed, sumptuary laws are useful in many other points. In former times the natural plainness and good sense of the English made them less necessary. But ever since the luxurious reign of King Charles the Second we have been doing violence to our natures, and are by this time so much altered for the worse that it is to be feared the very same dispositions that make them necessary will for ever hinder them from being enacted or put in execution.

A private family in difficult circumstances, all men agree, ought to melt down their plate, walk on foot, retrench the number of their servants, wear neither jewels nor rich clothes, and deny themselves expensive diversions; and why not the public? Had anything like this been done, our taxes had been less, or, which is the same thing, we should have felt them less. But it is very remarkable that luxury was never at so great a height, nor spread so generally through the nation, as during the expense of the late wars, and the heavy debt that still lieth upon us.

This vice draweth after it a train of evils which cruelly infest the public; faction, ambition, envy, avarice, and that of the worst kind, being much more hurtful in its consequences, though not so infamous as penury. It was the great art of Cardinal Richelieu, by encouraging luxury and expense, to impoverish the French nobility and render them altogether dependent on the crown, which hath been since very successfully effected. These and many more considera-

Digitized by Google

tions shew the necessity there is for sumptuary laws; nor can anything be said against them in this island which might not with equal force be objected in other countries, which have nevertheless judged the public benefit of such institutions to be of far greater importance than the short sufferings of a few who subsist by the luxury of others.

It is evident that old taxes may be better borne, as well as new ones raised, by sumptuary laws judiciously framed, not to damage our trade, but retrench our luxury. It is evident that, for want of these, luxury (which, like the other fashions, never faileth to descend) hath infected all ranks of people, and that this enableth the Dutch and French to undersell us, to the great prejudice of our traffic. We cannot but know that, in our present circumstances, it should be our care, as it is our interest, to make poverty tolerable; in short, we have the experience of many ages to convince us that a corrupt luxurious people must of themselves fall into slavery, although no attempt be made upon them. These and the like obvious reflexions should, one would think, have forced any people in their senses upon frugal measures.

But we are doomed to be undone. Neither the plain reason of the thing, nor the experience of past ages, nor the examples we have before our eyes, can restrain us from imitating, not to say surpassing, the most corrupt and ruined people, in those very points of luxury that ruined them. Our Gaming, our Operas, our Masquerades, are, in spite of our debts and poverty, become the wonder of our neighbours. If there be any man so void of all thought and common sense as not to see where this must end, let him but compare what Venice was at the league of Cambray with what it is at present, and he will be convinced how truly those fashionable pastimes are calculated to depress and ruin a nation.

But neither Venice nor Paris, nor any other town in any part of the world, ever knew such an expensive ruinous folly as our Masquerade. This alone is sufficient to inflame and satisfy the several appetites for gaming, dressing, intriguing, and luxurious eating and drinking. It is a most skilful abridgment, the very quintessence, the abstract of all those senseless vanities that have ever been the ruin of fools and detestation of wise men. And all this, under the notion of an elegant entertainment, hath been admitted among us;

Digitized by Google

though it be in truth a contagion of the worst kind. The plague, dreadful as it is, is an evil of short duration; cities have often recovered and flourished after it; but when was it known that a people broken and corrupt by luxury recovered themselves? Not to say that general corruption of manners never faileth to draw after it some heavy judgment of war, famine, or pestilence. Of this we have a fresh instance in one of the most debauched towns of Europe,[1] and nobody knows how soon it may be our own case. This elegant entertainment is indeed suspended for the present, but there remains so strong a propension towards it that, if the wisdom of the legislature does not interpose, it will soon return, with the additional temptation of having been forbid for a time. It were stupid and barbarous to declaim against keeping up the spirit of the people by proper diversions, but then they should be proper, such as polish and improve their minds, or increase the strength and activity of their bodies; none of which ends are answered by the Masquerade, no more than by those French and Italian follies, which to our shame, are imported and encouraged at a time when the nation ought to be too grave for such trifles.

It is not to be believed what influence public diversions have on the spirit and manners of a people. The Greeks wisely saw this, and made a very serious affair of their public sports. For the same reason it will perhaps seem worthy the care of our legislature to regulate the public diversions by an absolute prohibition of those which have a direct tendency to corrupt our morals, as well as by a reformation of the Drama; which, when rightly managed, is such a noble entertainment, and gave those fine lessons of morality and good sense to the Athenians of old, and to our British gentry above a century ago; but for these last ninety years hath entertained us, for the most part, with such wretched things as spoil instead of improving the taste and manners of the audience. Those who are attentive to such propositions only as may fill their pockets will probably slight these things as trifles below the care of the legislature. But I am sure all honest thinking men must lament to see their country run headlong into all those luxurious follies, which, it is evident, have been

[1] Marseilles. (The reference is to the plague of 1720-21.—ED.)

Digitized by Google

fatal to other nations, and will undoubtedly prove fatal to us also, if a timely stop be not put to them.

Public spirit, that glorious principle of all that is great and good, is so far from being cherished or encouraged that it is become ridiculous in this enlightened age, which is taught to laugh at every thing that is serious as well as sacred. The same atheistical narrow spirit, centering all our cares upon private interest, and contracting all our hopes within the enjoyment of this present life, equally produceth a neglect of what we owe to God and our country. Tully hath long since observed "that it is impossible for those who have no belief of the immortality of the soul, or a future state of rewards and punishments, to sacrifice their particular interests and passions to the public good, or have a generous concern for posterity," and our own experience confirmeth the truth of this observation.

In order therefore to recover a sense of public spirit, it is to be wished that men were first affected with a true sense of religion; *pro aris et focis*, having ever been the great motive to courage and perseverance in a public cause.

It would likewise be a very useful policy, and warranted by the example of the wisest governments, to make the natural love of fame and reputation subservient to promoting that noble principle. Triumphal arches, columns, statues, inscriptions, and the like monuments of public services, have, in former times, been found great incentives to virtue and magnanimity; and would probably have the same effects on Englishmen which they have had on Greeks and Romans. And perhaps a pillar of infamy would be found a proper and exemplary punishment in cases of signal public villainy, where the loss of fortune, liberty, or life, are not proportioned to the crime; or where the skill of the offender, or the nature of his offence, may screen him from the letter of the law.

Several of these are to be seen at Genoa, Milan, and other towns of Italy, where it is the custom to demolish the house of a citizen who hath conspired the ruin of his country, or been guilty of any enormous crime towards the public, and in place thereof to erect a monument of the crime and criminal, described in the blackest manner. We have nothing of this sort that I know, but that which is commonly

Digitized by Google

called the Monument, which in the last age was erected for an affair no way more atrocious than the modern unexampled attempt[1] of men easy in their fortunes, and unprovoked by hardships of any sort, in cool blood, and with open eyes, to ruin their native country. This fact will never be forgotten, and it were to be wished that with it the public detestation thereof may be transmitted to posterity, which would in some measure vindicate the honour of the present, and be a useful lesson to future ages.

Those noble arts of architecture, sculpture, and painting do not only adorn the public but have also an influence on the minds and manners of men, filling them with great ideas, and spiriting them up to an emulation of worthy actions. For this cause they were cultivated and encouraged by the Greek cities, who vied with each other in building and adorning their temples, theatres, porticos, and the like public works, at the same time that they discouraged private luxury; the very reverse of our conduct.

To propose the building a parliament house, courts of justice, royal palace, and other public edifices, suitable to the dignity of the nation, and adorning them with paintings and statues, which may transmit memorable things and persons to posterity, would probably be laughed at as a vain affair, of great expense, and little use to the public; and it must be owned we have reduced ourselves to such straits that any proposition of expense suiteth ill with our present circumstances. But, how proper soever this proposal may be for the times, yet it comes so properly into a discourse of public spirit that I could not but say something of it. And at another time it will not seem unreasonable, if we consider that it is no more than the wisest nations have done before us, that it would spirit up new arts, employ many hands, keep the money circulating at home, and, lastly, that it would be a notable instance of public spirit, as well as a motive to it.

The same noble principle may be also encouraged by erecting an Academy of ingenious men, whose employment it would be to compile the history of Great Britain, to make discourses proper to inspire men with a zeal for the public, and celebrate the memory of those who have been ornaments

[1] The South Sea project.

Digitized by Google

to the nation, or done it eminent service. Not to mention that this would improve our language, and amuse some busy spirits of the age; which perhaps would be no ill policy.

This is not without example; for, to say nothing of the French Academy, which is prostituted to meaner purposes, it hath been the custom of the Venetian Senate to appoint one of their order to continue the history of the Republic. This was introduced in the flourishing state of that people, and is still in force. We fall short of other nations in the number of good historians, though no nation in Christendom hath produced greater events, or more worthy to be recorded. The Athenian Senate appointed orators to commemorate annually those who died in defence of their country, which solemnity was performed at their monuments erected in honour of them by the public; and the panegyrics, composed by Isocrates and Pericles, as well as many passages in Tully, inform us with what pleasure the ancient orators used to expatiate in praise of their country.

Concord and union among ourselves is rather to be hoped for as an effect of public spirit than proposed as a means to promote it. Candid, generous men, who are true lovers of their country, can never be enemies to one half of their countrymen, or carry their resentments so far as to ruin the public for the sake of a party. Now I have fallen upon the mention of our parties, I shall beg leave to insert a remark or two, for the service both of Whig and Tory, without entering into their respective merits. First, it is impossible for either party to ruin the other without involving themselves and their posterity in the same ruin. Secondly, it is very feasible for either party to get the better of the other if they could first get the better of themselves; and, instead of indulging the little womanish passions of obstinacy, resentment, and revenge, steadily promote the true interest of their country, in those great clear points of piety, industry, sobriety of manners, and an honest regard for posterity, which, all men of sense agree, are essential to public happiness. There would be something so great and good in this conduct as must necessarily overbear all calumny and opposition. But that men should act reasonably is rather to be wished than hoped.

I am well aware, that to talk of public spirit, and the means of retrieving it, must, to narrow sordid minds, be



Digitized by Google

matter of jest and ridicule, how conformable soever it be to right reason, and the maxims of antiquity. Though one would think the most selfish men might see it was their interest to encourage a spirit in others, by which they, to be sure, must be gainers. Yet such is the corruption and folly of the present age that a public spirit is treated like ignorance of the world and want of sense; and all the respect is paid to cunning men, who bend and wrest the public interest to their own private ends, that in other times hath been thought due to those who were generous enough to sacrifice their private interest to that of their country.

Such practices and such maxims as these must necessarily ruin a state. But if the contrary should prevail, we may hope to see men in power prefer the public wealth and security to their own, and men of money make free gifts, or lend it without interest to their country. This, how strange and incredible soever it may seem to us, hath been often done in other States. And the natural English temper considered, together with the force of example, no one can tell how far a proposal for a free gift may go among the monied men, when set on foot by the legislature, and encouraged by two or three men of figure, who have the spirit to do a generous thing, and the understanding to see it is every private man's interest to support that of the public.

If they who have their fortunes in money should make a voluntary gift, the public would be eased, and at the same time maintain its credit. Nor is a generous love of their country the only motive that should induce them to this. Common equity requires that all subjects should equally share the public burden; and common sense shews that those who are foremost in the danger should not be the most backward in contributing to prevent it.

Before I leave this subject, I cannot but take notice of that most infamous practice of Bribery, than which nothing can be more opposite to public spirit, since every one who takes a bribe plainly owns that he prefers his private interest to that of his country. This corruption is become a national crime, having infected the lowest as well as the highest among us, and is so general and notorious that, as it cannot be matched in former ages, so it is to be hoped it will not be imitated by posterity.

Digitized by Google

This calls to mind another guilt, which we possess in a very eminent degree; there being no nation under the sun where solemn Perjury is so common, or where there are such temptations to it. The making men swear so often in their own case, and where they have an interest to conceal the truth, hath gradually worn off that awful respect which was once thought due to an appeal to Almighty God; insomuch, that men now-a-days break their fast and a custom-house oath with the same peace of mind. It is a policy peculiar to us, the obliging men to perjure or betray themselves, and hath had no one good effect, but many very ill ones. Sure I am that other nations, without the hundredth part of our swearing, contrive to do their business at least as well as we do. And perhaps our legislature will think it proper to follow their example. For, whatever measures are taken, so long as we lie under such a load of guilt as national Perjury and national Bribery, it is impossible we can prosper.

This poor nation hath sorely smarted of late, and to ease the present smart, a sudden remedy (as is usual in such cases) hath been thought of. But we must beware not to mistake an anodyne for a cure. Where the vitals are touched, and the whole mass of humours vitiated, it is not enough to ease the part pained; we must look farther, and apply general correctives; otherwise the ill humour may soon shew itself in some other part.

The South-sea affair, how sensible soever, is not the original evil, or the great source of our misfortunes; it is but the natural effect of those principles which for many years have been propagated with great industry. And, as a sharp distemper, by reclaiming a man from intemperance, may prolong his life, so it is not impossible but this public calamity that lies so heavy on the nation may prevent its ruin. It would certainly prove the greatest of blessings, if it should make all honest men of one party; if it should put religion and virtue in countenance, restore a sense of public spirit, and convince men it is a dangerous folly to pursue private aims in opposition to the good of their country; if it should turn our thought from cozenage and stock-jobbing to industry and frugal methods of life; in fine, if it should revive and inflame that native spark of British worth and honour, which hath too long lain smothered and oppressed.

Digitized by Google

With this view I have, among so many projects for remedying the ill state of our affairs in a particular instance, ventured to publish the foregoing general hints, which as they have been thrown together from a zeal for the public good, so I heartily wish they may be regarded neither more nor less than as they are fitted to promote that end.

Though it must be owned that little can be hoped if we consider the corrupt degenerate age we live in. I know it is an old folly to make peevish complaints of the times, and charge the common failures of human nature on a particular age. One may nevertheless venture to affirm that the present hath brought forth new and portentous villainies, not to be paralleled in our own or any other history. We have been long preparing for some great catastrophe. Vice and villainy have by degrees grown reputable among us; our infidels have passed for fine gentlemen, and our venal traitors for men of sense, who knew the world. We have made a jest of public spirit, and cancelled all respect for whatever our laws and religion repute sacred. The old English modesty is quite worn off, and instead of blushing for our crimes, we are ashamed only of piety and virtue. In short, other nations have been wicked, but we are the first who have been wicked upon principle.

The truth is, our symptoms are so bad that, notwithstanding all the care and vigilance of the legislature, it is to be feared the final period of our State approaches. Strong constitutions, whether politic or natural, do not feel light disorders. But when they are sensibly affected, the distemper is for the most part violent and of an ill prognostic. Free governments like our own were planted by the Goths in most parts of Europe; and, though we all know what they are come to, yet we seem disposed rather to follow their example than to profit by it.

Whether it be in the order of things, that civil States should have, like natural products, their several periods of growth, perfection, and decay; or whether it be an effect, as seems more probable, of human folly that, as industry produces wealth, so wealth should produce vice, and vice ruin.

God grant the time be not near when men shall say: "This island was once inhabited by a religious, brave, sincere people, of plain uncorrupt manners, respecting inbred worth

Digitized by Google

rather than titles and appearances, assertors of liberty, lovers of their country, jealous of their own rights, and unwilling to infringe the rights of others; improvers of learning and useful arts, enemies to luxury, tender of other men's lives, and prodigal of their own; inferior in nothing to the old Greeks or Romans, and superior to each of those people in the perfection of the other. Such were our ancestors during their rise and greatness; but they degenerated, grew servile flatterers of men in power, adopted Epicurean notions, became venal, corrupt, injurious, which drew upon them the hatred of God and man, and occasioned their final ruin."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

# A PROPOSAL

FOR

# THE BETTER SUPPLYING OF CHURCHES IN OUR FOREIGN PLANTATIONS.

1725.

Digitized by Google

[This pamphlet, with its generous and romantic proposal, should be read in connexion with the preceding essay. The times were too much out of joint to be set right by a man of Berkeley's eager and elastic spirit; and we can imagine him yearning for a land of less vitiated life. He created a paradise in his imagination and persuaded himself that it could be realized over the seas. The generous answer of his friends to the following appeal, and a promise of £20,000 from Walpole, sent him across to America. He disembarked at Rhode Island and waited in vain for the grant. After three years he returned, saddened and disappointed. Yet he had not failed: his three years of beautiful seclusion were not spent in vain; for Berkeley did more indirectly for higher education in America than he could ever have dreamed of accomplishing directly. He founded, indeed, no university on an inaccessible island; but the impulse his influence and generosity gave to academic life founded more than one university on the mainland. Many definite records and results of his life there still remain, notably the scholarship he founded at Yale; and Berkeley, the seat of the state university of California, is named in his honour as the apostle of higher learning in America. This essay was published in 1725 and reprinted in the "Miscellany."]

Digitized by Google

A

# PROPOSAL

For the better Supplying of

# CHURCHES

IN OUR

# *Foreign Plantations,*

AND FOR

## Converting the Savage *Americans* to CHRISTIANITY,

By a COLLEGE to be erected in the *Summer Islands*, otherwise called the Isles of *Bermudas*.

---

*The harveſt is truly great, but the labourers are few.* Luke c. 10. v. 2.

---

---

*LONDON*,

Printed by H. WOODFALL, at *Elzevir's-Head*, without *Temple-Bar*. 1725.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

# A PROPOSAL, &c.

ALTHOUGH there are several excellent persons of the Church of England, whose good intentions and endeavours have not been wanting to propagate the Gospel in foreign parts, who have even combined into Societies for that very purpose, and given great encouragement, not only for English missionaries in the West Indies, but also for the reformed of other nations, led by their example, to propagate Christianity in the East; it is nevertheless acknowledged that there is at this day but little sense of religion, and a most notorious corruption of manners, in the English Colonies settled on the Continent of America, and the Islands. It is also acknowledged that the gospel hath hitherto made but a very inconsiderable progress among the neighbouring Americans, who still continue in much the same ignorance and barbarism in which we found them above a hundred years ago.

I shall therefore venture to submit my thoughts, upon a point that I have long considered, to better judgments, in hopes that any expedient will be favourably hearkened to which is proposed for the remedy of these evils. Now, in order to effect this, it should seem the natural proper method to provide, in the first place, a constant supply of worthy clergymen for the English churches in those parts; and, in the second place, a like constant supply of zealous missionaries, well fitted for propagating Christianity among the savages.

For, though the surest means to reform the morals, and soften the behaviour of men be, to preach to them the pure uncorrupt doctrine of the gospel, yet it cannot be denied that the success of preaching dependeth in good measure on the character and skill of the preacher. Forasmuch as mankind

Digitized by Google

are more apt to copy characters than to practise precepts, and forasmuch as argument, to attain its full strength, doth not less require the life of zeal than the weight of reason; and the same doctrine which maketh great impression when delivered with decency and address loseth very much of its force by passing through awkward or unskilful hands.

Now the clergy sent over to America have proved, too many of them, very meanly qualified both in learning and morals for the discharge of their office. And indeed little can be expected from the example or instruction of those who quit their native country on no other motive than that they are unable to procure a livelihood in it, which is known to be often the case.

To this may be imputed the small care that hath been taken to convert the negroes of our Plantations, who, to the infamy of England and scandal of the world, continue heathen under Christian masters, and in Christian countries. Which could never be, if our planters were rightly instructed and made sensible that they disappointed their own baptism by denying it to those who belong to them: that it would be of advantage to their affairs to have slaves who should "obey in all things their masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, as fearing God:" that gospel liberty consists with temporal servitude; and that their slaves would only become better slaves by being Christian.

And though it be allowed that some of the clergy in our Colonies have approved themselves men of merit, it will at the same time be allowed that the most zealous and able missionary from England must find himself but ill qualified for converting the American heathen, if we consider the difference of language, their wild way of living, and, above all, the great jealousy and prejudice which savage nations have towards foreigners, or innovations introduced by them.

These considerations make it evident, that a College or Seminary in those parts is very much wanted; and therefore the providing such a Seminary is earnestly proposed and recommended to all those who have it in their power to contribute to so good a work. By this, two ends would be obtained:

First, the youth of our English Plantations might be them-

Digitized by Google

selves fitted for the ministry; and men of merit would be then glad to fill the churches of their native country, which are now a drain for the very dregs and refuse of ours.

At present, there are, I am told, many churches vacant in our Plantations, and many very ill supplied; nor can all the vigilance and wisdom of that great prelate, whose peculiar care it is, prevent this, so long as the aforesaid churches are supplied from England.

And supplied they must be with such as can be picked up in England or Ireland, until a nursery of learning for the education of the natives is founded. This indeed might provide a constant succession of learned and exemplary pastors; and what effect this might be supposed to have on their flocks I need not say.

Secondly, the children of savage Americans, brought up in such a Seminary, and well instructed in religion and learning, might make the ablest and properest missionaries for spreading the gospel among their countrymen; who would be less apt to suspect, and readier to embrace a doctrine recommended by neighbours or relations, men of their own blood and language, than if it were proposed by foreigners, who would not improbably be thought to have designs on the liberty or property of their converts.

The young Americans necessary for this purpose may, in the beginning, be procured, either by peaceable methods from those savage nations which border on our Colonies, and are in friendship with us, or by taking captive the children of our enemies.

It is proposed to admit into the aforesaid College only such savages as are under ten years of age, before evil habits have taken a deep root; and yet not so early as to prevent retaining their mother-tongue, which should be preserved by intercourse among themselves.

It is farther proposed to ground these young Americans thoroughly in religion and morality, and to give them a good tincture of other learning; particularly of eloquence, history, and practical mathematics; to which it may not be improper to add some skill in physic.

If there were a yearly supply of ten or a dozen such missionaries sent abroad into their respective countries, after

Digitized by Google

they had received the degree of master of arts in the aforesaid College, and holy orders in England (till such time as Episcopacy be established in those parts), it is hardly to be doubted but, in a little time, the world would see good and great effects thereof.

For, to any considering man, the employing American missionaries for the conversion of America will, of all others, appear the most likely method to succeed; especially if care be taken that, during the whole course of their education, an eye should be had to their mission; that they should be taught betimes to consider themselves as trained up in that sole view, without any other prospect of provision or employment; that a zeal for religion and love of their country should be early and constantly instilled into their minds, by repeated lectures and admonitions; that they should not only be incited by the common topics of religion and nature, but farther animated and inflamed by the great examples in past ages of public spirit and virtue, to rescue their countrymen from their savage manners to a life of civility and religion.

If his Majesty would graciously please to grant a Charter for a College to be erected in a proper place for these uses, it is to be hoped a fund may be soon raised, by the contribution of well-disposed persons, sufficient for building and endowing the same. For, as the necessary expense would be small, so there are men of religion and humanity in England who would be pleased to see any design set forward for the glory of God and the good of mankind.

A small expense would suffice to subsist and educate the American missionaries in a plain simple manner, such as might make it easy for them to return to the coarse and poor methods of life in use among their countrymen; and nothing can contribute more to lessen this expense, than a judicious choice of the Situation where the Seminary is to stand.

Many things ought to be considered in the choice of a situation. It should be in a good air; in a place where provisions are cheap and plenty; where an intercourse might easily be kept up with all parts of America and the Islands; in a place of security, not exposed to the insults of pirates, savages, or other enemies; where there is no great trade

Digitized by Google

which might tempt the Readers or Fellows of the College to become merchants, to the neglect of their proper business; where there are neither riches nor luxury to divert or lessen their application, or to make them uneasy and dissatisfied with a homely frugal subsistence; lastly, where the inhabitants, if such a place may be found, are noted for innocence and simplicity of manners. I need not say of how great importance this point would be towards forming the morals of young students, and what mighty influence it must have on the mission.

It is evident the College long since projected in Barbadoes would be defective in many of these particulars; for, though it may have its use among the inhabitants, yet a place of so high trade, so much wealth and luxury, and such dissolute morals (not to mention the great price and scarcity of provisions) must, at first sight, seem a very improper situation for a general Seminary intended for the forming missionaries, and educating youth in religion and sobriety of manners. The same objections lie against the neighbouring islands.

And, if we consider the accounts given of their avarice and licentiousness, their coldness in the practice of religion, and their aversion from propagating it (which appears in the withholding their slaves from baptism), it is to be feared, that the inhabitants in the populous parts of our Plantations on the Continent are not much fitter than those in the islands above mentioned, to influence or assist such a design. And, as to the more remote and less frequented parts, the difficulty of being supplied with necessaries, the danger of being exposed to the inroads of savages, and, above all, the want of intercourse with other places, render them improper situations for a Seminary of religion and learning.

It will not be amiss to insert here an observation I remember to have seen in an Abstract of the Proceedings, &c., annexed to the Dean of Canterbury's Sermon before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; that the savage Indians who live on the Continent will not suffer their children to learn English or Dutch, lest they should be debauched by conversing with their European neighbours; which is a melancholy but strong confirmation of the truth of what hath been now advanced.

A general intercourse and correspondence with all the

Digitized by Google

English Colonies, both on the Islands and the Continent, and with other parts of America, hath been before laid down as a necessary circumstance, the reason whereof is very evident. But this circumstance is hardly to be found. For, on the Continent, where there are neither inns, nor carriages, nor bridges over the rivers, there is no travelling by land between distant places. And the English settlements are reputed to extend along the sea-coast for the space of fifteen hundred miles. It is therefore plain there can be no convenient communication between them otherwise than by sea; no advantage therefore, in this point, can be gained by settling on the Continent.

There is another consideration which equally regards the Continent and the Islands, that the general course of trade and correspondence lies from all those Colonies to Great Britain alone. Whereas, for our present purpose, it would be necessary to pitch upon a place, if such could be found, which maintains a constant intercourse with all the other Colonies, and whose commerce lies chiefly or altogether (not in Europe, but) in America.

There is but one spot that I can find to which this circumstance agrees; and that is, the Isles of Bermuda, otherwise called the Summer Islands. These, having no rich commodity or manufacture, such as sugar, tobacco, or the like, wherewithal to trade to England, are obliged to become carriers for America, as the Dutch are for Europe. The Bermudans are excellent ship-wrights and sailors, and have a great number of very good sloops, which are always passing and repassing from all parts of America. They drive a constant trade to the islands of Jamaica, Barbadoes, Antigua, &c., with butter, onions, cabbages, and other roots and vegetables, which they have in great plenty and perfection. They have also some small manufactures of joiner's work and matting, which they export to the Plantations on the Continent. Hence Bermudan sloops are oftener seen in the ports of America than in any other. And, indeed, by the best information I could get, it appears they are the only people of all the British Plantations who hold a general correspondence with the rest,

And as the commerce of Bermuda renders it a very fit place wherein to erect a Seminary, so likewise doth its situa-

Digitized by Google

tion, it being placed between our Plantations on the Continent and those in the Isles, so as equally to respect both. To which may be added, that it lies in the way of vessels passing from America to Great Britain; all which makes it plain that the youth, to be educated in a Seminary placed in the Summer Islands would have frequent opportunities of going thither and corresponding with their friends. It must indeed be owned that some will be obliged to go a long way to any one place which we suppose resorted to from all parts of our Plantations; but if we were to look out a spot the nearest approaching to an equal distance from all the rest, I believe it would be found to be Bermuda. It remains that we see whether it enjoys the other qualities or conditions laid down as well as this.

The Summer Islands are situated near the latitude of thirty-three degrees; no part of the world enjoys a purer air, or a more temperate climate, the great ocean which environs them at once moderating the heat of the south winds, and the severity of the north-west. Such a latitude on the Continent might be thought too hot; but the air in Bermuda is perpetually fanned and kept cool by sea-breezes, which render the weather the most healthy and delightful that could be wished, being (as is affirmed by persons who have long lived there) of one equal tenor almost throughout the whole year, like the latter end of a fine May; insomuch that it is resorted to as the Montpelier of America.

Nor are these isles (if we may believe the accounts given of them) less remarkable for plenty than for health; there being, besides beef, mutton, and fowl, great abundance of fruits, and garden-stuff of all kinds in perfection: to this, if we add the great plenty and variety of fish which is every day taken on their coasts, it would seem, that a Seminary could nowhere be supplied with better provisions, or cheaper than here.

About forty years ago, upon cutting down many tall cedars that sheltered their orange trees from the north wind (which sometimes blows even there so as to affect that delicate plant), great part of their orange plantations suffered; but other cedars are since grown up, and no doubt a little industry would again produce as great plenty of oranges as ever was there heretofore. I mention this because some have inferred



Digitized by Google

from the present scarcity of that fruit, for which Bermuda was once so famous, that there hath been a change in the soil and climate for the worse. But this, as hath been observed, proceeded from another cause, which is now in great measure taken away.

Bermuda is a cluster of small islands, which lie in a very narrow compass, containing, in all, not quite twenty thousand acres. This group of isles is (to use Mr. Waller's expression) walled round with rocks,[1] which render them inaccessible to pirates or enemies; there being but two narrow entrances, both well guarded by forts. It would therefore be impossible to find anywhere a more secure retreat for students.

The trade of Bermuda consists only in garden-stuff, and some poor manufactures, principally of cedar and the palmetto-leaf. Bermuda hats are worn by our ladies: they are made of a sort of mat, or (as they call it) platting made of the palmetto-leaf, which is the only commodity that I can find exported from Bermuda to Great Britain; and as there is no prospect of making a fortune by this small trade, so it cannot be supposed to tempt the Fellows of the College to engage in it, to the neglect of their peculiar business, which might possibly be the case elsewhere.

Such as their trade is, such is their wealth; the inhabitants being much poorer than the other Colonies, who do not fail to despise them upon that account. But, if they have less wealth, they have withal less vice and expensive folly than their neighbours. They are represented as a contented, plain, innocent sort of people, free from avarice and luxury, as well as the other corruptions that attend those vices.

I am also informed that they are more constant attendants on Divine service, more kind and respectful to their pastor (when they have one), and shew much more humanity to their slaves, and charity to one another, than is observed among the English in the other Plantations. One reason of this may be that condemned criminals, being employed in the manufactures of sugar and tobacco, were never transported thither. But, whatever be the cause, the facts are attested by a clergyman of good credit, who lived among them.

[1] "Bermuda, walled with rocks."
*Battle of the Summer Islands.*—ED.

Digitized by Google

Among a people of this character, and in a situation thus circumstantiated, it would seem that a Seminary of religion and learning might very fitly be placed. The correspondence with other parts of America, the goodness of the air, the plenty and security of the place, the frugality and innocence of the inhabitants, all conspiring to favour such a design. Thus much at least is evident, that young students would be there less liable to be corrupted in their morals; and the governing part would be easier, and better contented with a small stipend, and a retired academical life, in a corner from whence avarice and luxury are excluded, than they can be supposed to be in the midst of a full trade and great riches, attended with all that high living and parade which our planters affect, and which, as well as all fashionable vices, should be far removed from the eyes of the young American missionaries, who are to lead a life of poverty and self-denial among their countrymen.

After all, it must be acknowledged, that though everything else should concur with our wishes, yet if a set of good Governors and Teachers be wanting, who are acquainted with the methods of education, and have the zeal and ability requisite for carrying on a design of this nature, it would certainly come to nothing.

An institution of this kind should be set on foot by men of prudence, spirit, and zeal, as well as competent learning, who should be led to it by other motives than the necessity of picking up a maintenance. For, upon this view, what man of merit can be supposed to quit his native country, and take up with a poor college subsistence in another part of the world, where there are so many considerable parishes actually void, and so many others ill supplied for want of fitting incumbents? Is it likely that Fellowships of fifty or sixty pounds a year should tempt abler or worthier men than benefices of many times their value?

And except able and worthy men do first engage in this affair, with a resolution to exert themselves in forming the manners of the youth, and giving them a proper education, it is evident the Mission and the College will be but in a very bad way. This inconvenience seems the most difficult to provide against, and if not provided against, it will be the most likely to obstruct any design of this nature. So true it

Digitized by Google

is, that where ignorance or ill manners once take place in a Seminary, they are sure to be handed down in a succession of illiterate or worthless men.

But this apprehension, which seems so well grounded, that a College in any part of America would either lie unprovided, or be worse provided than their churches are, hath no place in Bermuda; there being at this time several gentlemen, in all respects very well qualified, and in possession of good preferments and fair prospects at home, who, having seriously considered the great benefits that may arise to the Church and to Mankind from such an undertaking, are ready to engage in it, and to dedicate the remainder of their lives to the instructing the youth of America, and prosecuting their own studies, upon a very moderate subsistence, in a retirement, so sweet and so secure, and every way so well fitted for a place of education and study, as Bermuda.

Thus much the writer hereof thought himself obliged to say of his associates. For himself he can only say that, as he values no preferment upon earth so much as that of being employed in the execution of this design, so he hopes to make up for other defects, by the sincerity of his endeavours.

In Europe, the Protestant religion hath of late years considerably lost ground, and America seems the likeliest place wherein to make up for what hath been lost in Europe, provided the proper methods are taken. Otherwise the Spanish missionaries in the south, and the French in the north, are making such a progress, as may one day spread the religion of Rome, and with it the usual hatred to Protestants, throughout all the savage nations of America; which would probably end in the utter extirpation of our Colonies, on the safety whereof depends so much of the nation's wealth, and so considerable a branch of his Majesty's revenue.

But, if this scheme were pursued, it would in all probability have much greater influence on the Americans than the utmost endeavours of popish emissaries can possibly have; who, from the difference of country, language, and interest, must lie under far greater difficulties and discourage-

Digitized by Google

ments than those whom we suppose yearly sent out from Bermuda to preach among their countrymen.

It cannot indeed be denied, that the great number of poor regulars, inured to hard living, and brought up in an implicit obedience to their superiors, hath hitherto given the Church of Rome, in regard to her missions, great advantage over the reformed churches. But, from what hath been said, it is, I think, evident, that this advantage may be overbalanced by our employing American missionaries.

Nor is the honour of the crown, nation, and church of England, unconcerned in this scheme; which, it is to be hoped, will remove the reproach we have so long lain under, that we fall as far short of our neighbours of the Romish communion in zeal for propagating religion, as we surpass them in the soundness and purity of it. And at the same time that the doing what may be so easily done takes away our reproach, it will cast no small lustre on his Majesty's reign, and derive a blessing from Heaven on his administration, and those who live under the influence thereof.

Men of narrow minds have a peculiar talent at objection, being never at a loss for something to say against whatsoever is not of their own proposing. And perhaps it will be said, in opposition to this proposal, that if we thought ourselves capable of gaining converts to the Church, we ought to begin with infidels, papists, and dissenters of all denominations, at home and to make proselytes of these before we think of foreigners; and that therefore our scheme is against duty. And, further, that, considering the great opposition which is found on the part of those who differ from us at home, no success can be expected among savages abroad; and that therefore it is against reason and experience.

In answer to this, I say, that religion like light is imparted without being diminished. That whatever is done abroad can be no hindrance or let to the conversion of infidels or others at home. That those who engage in this affair imagine they will not be missed, where there is no want of schools or clergy; but that they may be of singular service in countries but thinly supplied with either, or altogether deprived of both: that our Colonies being of the same blood, language and religion, with ourselves, are in effect our countrymen. But that Christian charity, not being

Digitized by Google

limited by those regards, doth extend to all mankind. And this may serve for an answer to the first point, that our design is against duty.

To the second point I answer; that ignorance is not so incurable as error; that you must pull down as well as build, erase as well as imprint, in order to make proselytes at home: whereas, the savage Americans, if they are in a state purely natural, and unimproved by education, they are also unincumbered with all that rubbish of superstition and prejudice, which is the effect of a wrong one. As they are less instructed, they are withal less conceited, and more teachable. And not being violently attached to any false system of their own, are so much the fitter to receive that which is true. Hence it is evident that success abroad ought not to be measured by that which we observe at home, and that the inference which was made from the difficulty of the one to the impossibility of the other, is altogether groundless.

It hath more the appearance of reason to object (what will possibly be objected by some) that this scheme hath been already tried to no purpose, several Indians having returned to their savage manners after they had been taught to write and read, and instructed in the Christian religion; a clear proof that their natural stupidity is not to be overcome by education.

In answer to this, I say, that the scheme now proposed hath never been tried, forasmuch as a thorough education in religion and morality, in Divine and human learning, doth not appear to have been ever given to any savage American: that much is to be hoped from a man ripe in years, and well grounded in religion and useful knowledge, while little or nothing can be expected from a youth but slightly instructed in the elements of either: that from the miscarriage or gross stupidity of some, a general incapacity of all Americans cannot be fairly inferred: that they shew as much natural sense as other uncultivated nations: that the empires of Mexico and Peru were evident proofs of their capacity, in which there appeared a relish of politics and a degree of art and politeness, which no European people were ever known to have arrived at without the use of letters or of iron, and which some perhaps have fallen short of with both those advantages.

Digitized by Google

To what hath been said, it may not be improper to add, that young Americans, educated in an island at some distance from their own country, will more easily be kept under discipline till they have attained a complete education, than on the continent; where they might find opportunities of running away to their countrymen, and returning to their brutal customs, before they were thoroughly imbued with good principles and habits.

It must, nevertheless, be acknowledged a difficult attempt to plant religion among the Americans, so long as they continue their wild and roving life. He who is obliged to hunt for his daily food, will have little curiosity or leisure to receive instruction. It would seem therefore the right way, to introduce religion and civil life at the same time into that part of the world: either attempt will assist and promote the other. Those therefore of the young savages, who upon trial are found less likely to improve by academical studies, may be taught agriculture, or the most necessary trades. And when husbandmen, weavers, carpenters, and the like, have planted those useful arts among their savage countrymen, and taught them to live in settled habitations, to canton out their land and till it, to provide vegetable food of all kinds, to preserve flocks and herds of cattle, to make convenient houses, and to clothe themselves decently: this will assist the spreading the gospel among them; this will dispose them to social virtues, and enable them to see and to feel the advantages of a religious and civil education.

And that this view of propagating the gospel and civil life among the savage nations of America, was a principal motive which induced the crown to send the first English Colonies thither, doth appear from the Charter granted by King James I. to the adventurers in Virginia. (See Purchas's "Pilgrims," vol. iv. b. i. c. 9.) And it is now but just (what might then seem charitable), that these poor creatures should receive some advantage with respect to their spiritual interests from those who have so much improved their temporal by settling among them.

It is most true, notwithstanding our present corruptions, that there are to be found in no country under the sun men of better inclinations, or greater abilities for doing good, than in England. But it is as true that success, in many cases,

Digitized by Google

depends not upon zeal, industry, wealth, learning, or the like faculties, so much as on the method wherein these are applied. We often see a small proportion of labour and expense in one way bring that about, which in others a much greater share of both could never effect. It hath been my endeavour to discover this way or method in the present case. What hath been done, I submit to the judgment of all good and reasonable men; who, I am persuaded, will never reject or discourage a proposal of this nature, on the score of slight objections, surmises, or difficulties, and thereby render themselves chargeable with the having prevented those good effects which might otherwise have been produced by it.

For it is, after all, possible, that unforeseen difficulties may arise in the prosecution of this design; many things may retard, and many things may threaten to obstruct it. But there is hardly any enterprise or scheme whatsoever, for the public good, in which difficulties are not often shewing themselves, and as often overcome by the blessing of God upon the prudence and resolution of the undertakers; though, for aught that appears, the present scheme is as likely to succeed and attended with as few difficulties, as any of this kind can possibly be.

For, to any man who considers the Divine power of religion, the innate force of reason and virtue, and the mighty effects often wrought by the constant regular operations even of a weak and small cause; it will seem natural and reasonable to suppose, that rivulets perpetually issuing forth from a fountain or reservoir of learning and religion, and streaming through all parts of America, must in due time have a great effect, in purging away the ill manners and irreligion of our Colonies, as well as the blindness and barbarity of the nations round them: especially if the reservoir be in a clean and private place, where its waters, out of the way of anything that may corrupt them, remain clear and pure; otherwise they are more likely to pollute than purify the places through which they flow.

The greatness of a benefaction is rather in proportion to the number and want of the receivers than to the liberality of the giver. A wise and good man would therefore be frugal in the management of his charity: that is, contrive it

Digitized by Google

so that it might extend to the greatest wants of the greatest number of his fellow-creatures. Now the greatest wants are spiritual wants, and by all accounts these are nowhere greater than in our Western Plantations, in many parts whereof Divine service is never performed for want of clergymen; in others, after such a manner and by such hands as scandalize even the worst of their own parishioners; where many English, instead of gaining converts, are themselves degenerated into heathens, being members of no church, without morals, without faith, without baptism. There can be, therefore, in no part of the Christian world a greater want of spiritual things than in our Plantations.

And, on the other hand, no part of the Gentile world are so inhuman and barbarous as the savage Americans, whose chief employment and delight consisting in cruelty and revenge; their lives must of all others be most opposite, as well to the light of nature as to the spirit of the gospel. Now, to reclaim these poor wretches, to prevent the many torments and cruel deaths which they daily inflict on each other, to contribute in any sort to put a stop to the numberless horrid crimes which they commit without remorse, and instead thereof to introduce the practice of virtue and piety, must surely be a work in the highest degree becoming every sincere and charitable Christian.

Those who wish well to religion and mankind will need no other motive to forward an undertaking calculated for the service of both. I shall, nevertheless, beg leave to observe, that whoever would be glad to cover a multitude of sins by an extensive and well-judged charity, or whoever, from an excellent and godlike temper of mind, seeks opportunities of doing good in his generation, will be pleased to meet with a scheme that so peculiarly puts it in his power, with small trouble or expense, to procure a great and lasting benefit to the world.

Ten pounds a year would (if I mistake not) be sufficient to defray the expense of a young American in the College of Bermuda, as to diet, lodging, clothes, books, and education: and if so, the interest of two hundred pounds may be a perpetual fund for maintaining one missionary at the College for ever; and in this succession many, it is to be hoped, may become powerful instruments for converting to Christianity

Digitized by Google

and civil life whole nations who now "sit in darkness and the shadow of death," and whose cruel brutal manners are a disgrace to human nature.

A benefaction of this kind seems to enlarge the very being of a man, extending it to distant places and to future times; inasmuch as unseen countries and after ages may feel the effects of his bounty, while he himself reaps the reward in the blessed society of all those, who, having turned "many to righteousness, shine as the stars for ever and ever."

---

P.S.

Since the foregoing *Proposal* was first made public, his Majesty hath been graciously pleased to grant a Charter for erecting a College by the name of St. Paul's College in Bermuda, for the uses abovementioned. Which College is to contain a President and nine Fellows. The first President appointed by charter is George Berkeley, D.D., and Dean of Derry. The three Fellows named in the charter are William Thompson, Jonathan Rogers, and James King, Masters of Arts and Fellows of Trinity College near Dublin. The nomination of a President is reserved to the Crown. The election of Fellows is vested in the President and the majority of the Fellows; as is likewise the government of the Society. The Lord Bishop of London for the time being is appointed Visitor; and such of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State for the time being as hath America in his province is appointed Chancellor of the said College. The President and Fellows have the power of making Statutes, to be approved by the Visitor: they have also the power of conferring Degrees in all Faculties. They are obliged to maintain and educate Indian Scholars at the rate of ten pounds *per annum* for each. They are obliged to transmit annual accounts of the state of the College, number of students, their progress, &c. to the Chancellor and Visitor. The aforesaid President and Fellows are licensed to hold their preferments in these Kingdoms till one year and a half be expired after their arrival in Bermuda. This Society is incorporated with the usual clauses, hath power to receive benefactions, purchase lands, keep a common seal, &c. Lastly, all in office under his Majesty are required to be

Digitized by Google

aiding and assisting to the protection and preservation thereof.[1]

[1] In the 1725 edition there came this paragraph, which seems worthy of preservation on account of the interest of some of the names :—"As this College is proposed to be built and endowed by charitable contributions and subscriptions, all well-disposed persons, whether of the laity or the clergy, are desired to assist, as opportunity shall offer, in forwarding and collecting the same without loss of time; to the end that the President and Fellows may be able to set out for Bermuda in next Spring; which is proposed in case provision can be made by that time of £60 per annum for each. And it is hoped that the charity and zeal of sincere Christians will not suffer a design of this nature to be disappointed for want of necessary provision. The contributions and subscriptions aforesaid, may be deposited in the hands of any of the persons hereafter named:—John Arbuthnot, M.D., in Corke Street; Revd. Martin Benson, archdeacon of Berkshire and prebendary of Durham, in Albermarle Street; Francis Child, Esqe., Banker in Fleet Street and Alderman of the City of London; Revd. Dr. Cobden, chaplain to the Ld. Bp. of London, at Fulham; Sir Clement Cotterel, Bart., in Dover Street; Sir Thomas Crosse, Kt., in Westminster; Sir Daniel Dolins, Kt., at Hackney; Thomas Green, Esqe., in Westminster; Revd. Mr. Hargrave, chaplain to the D. of Newcastle and preb. of Westminster; Edward Harley, Esqe., auditor of Imprests in Lincoln's Inn; Benj. and Henry Hoare, Esquires, Bankers in Fleet Street; Archibald Hutcheson in James Street near Golden Square; Revd. Dr. King, Master of the Charterhouse and first chapln. to the Ld. Chancellor; Revd. Dr. Lisle, rector of Bow and chapln. to the Archbishop of Canterbury; Revd. Dr. Lupton, prebendary of Durham, preacher at Lincoln's Inn; Revd. Dr. Marshall, rector of Foster lane and preb. of Windsor; Revd. Dr. Mayo, Treasurer to the S.P.C.K., at St. Thomas's Hospital in Southwark; Revd. Dr. Moss, Dean of Ely, preacher at Gray's Inn; Revd. Dr. Pelling, rector of St. Ann's, Soho; Revd. Dr. Pierce, vicar of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields; Hon. Augustus Schutz, Esq., Master of the Wardrobe; Revd. Dr. Sherlock, Dean of Chichester and Master of the Temple; Sir William Wentworth, Bart., at Clarges Street. The money received by these gentlemen is to be laid out in purchasing lands or perpetual annuities for endowment of the college aforesaid, and in building and providing necessaries for the same, by order or with the approbation of His Grace the Ld. Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt. Hon. Peter, Lord King, High Chancellor of Gt. Britain, His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, Sec. of State for the Plantations in America, and the Rt. Revd. Ld. Bishop of London, who have been pleased to accept the office of Trustees or Overseers of so useful a charity. N.B. Till such time as the contributions and subscriptions amount to a sum sufficient for providing five persons with the above-mentioned salaries of sixty pounds per an., the subscribers shall not be desired to pay in their money."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

# VERSES,[1]

ON THE

## PROSPECT OF PLANTING ARTS AND LEARNING

IN

## AMERICA.

THE Muse, disgusted at an age and clime
  Barren of every glorious theme,
In distant lands now waits a better time,
  Producing subjects worthy fame:

In happy climes, where from the genial sun
  And virgin earth such scenes ensue,
The force of art by nature seems outdone,
  And fancied beauties by the true:

In happy climes, the seat of innocence,
  Where nature guides and virtue rules,
Where men shall not impose for truth and sense
  The pedantry of courts and schools:

[1] These verses were first published in the "Miscellany" of 1752, but belong plainly to this period. Various stories are told about the place and date of composition; but in the absence of positive proof to the contrary, I should assign them to the period between 1721 and 1725 when Berkeley was becoming disgusted with English life and dreaming of his Utopia. (See the two preceding introductory notes). The poem is sometimes described as prophetic; but it may be doubted whether Berkeley himself would think so, could he revisit America.

Digitized by Google

There shall be sung another golden age,
The rise of empire and of arts,
The good and great inspiring epic rage,
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

Not such as Europe breeds in her decay;
Such as she bred when fresh and young,
When heavenly flame did animate her clay,
By future poets shall be sung.

Westward the course of empire takes its way:
The four first Acts already past,
A fifth shall close the Drama with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

Digitized by Google

# A SERMON,

1732.

Digitized by Google

[THIS Sermon, the only purely theological publication of Berkeley's lifetime, was preached soon after his return to England. Since the S.P.G. was primarily concerned with America, no more suitable or interesting preacher could have been chosen. As a piece of oratory the work is not remarkable; but it is thoroughly characteristic in diction and vocabulary. It reveals the charity of Berkeley's attitude towards other Christian sects, his horror of "Free-thinking," and his dislike of abstractions as well in religion as in philosophy. The sermon was published in 1732 and reprinted in the "Miscellany" (1752).]

Digitized by Google

A

# SERMON

Preached before the

## Incorporated Society

FOR THE

## *Propagation of the Goſpel in Foreign Parts;*

AT THEIR

## ANNIVERSARY MEETING

IN THE

## Pariſh-Church of St *Mary-le-Bow,*

On FRIDAY, *February* 18, 1731.

---

By *GEORGE BERKELEY*, D.D.
Dean of *Londonderry.*

---

*LONDON:*
Printed by J. DOWNING, in *Bartholomew-Cloſe*, near *Weſt-Smithfield*, 1732.

Digitized by Google

*Feb.* 18, 173½

*At the Anniversary Meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.*

AGREED, That the thanks of the Society be given to the Reverend Mr. Dean Berkeley, for his sermon preached this day before the SOCIETY, and that he be desired to print the same.

DAVID HUMPHREYS, *Secretary.*

Digitized by Google

# JOHN xvii. 3.

*"This is Life Eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."*

THAT human kind were not designed merely to sojourn a few days upon this earth: that a being of such excellence as the soul of man, so capable of a nobler life, and having such a high sense of things moral and intellectual, was not created in the sole view of being imprisoned in an earthly tabernacle, and partaking a few pains and pleasures which chequer this mortal life, without aspiring to anything either above or beyond it, is a fundamental doctrine as well of natural religion as of the Christian. It comes at once recommended by the authority of philosophers and evangelists. And that there actually is in the mind of man a strong instinct and desire, an appetite and tendency towards another and a better state, incomparably superior to the present, both in point of happiness and duration, is no more than every one's experience and inward feeling may inform him. The satiety and disrelish attending sensual enjoyments, the relish for things of a more pure and spiritual kind, the restless motion of the mind from one terrene object or pursuit to another, and often a flight or endeavour above them all towards something unknown, and perfective of its nature, are so many signs and tokens of this better state, which in the style of the gospel is termed Life Eternal.

And as this is the greatest good that can befal us, the very end of our being, and that alone which can crown and satisfy our wishes, and without which we shall be ever restless and uneasy; so every man who knows and acts up to his true interest must make it his principal care and study to obtain it: and, in order to this, he must endeavour to live suitably to his calling, and of consequence endeavour to make others

Digitized by Google

obtain it too. For, how can a Christian shew himself worthy of his calling otherwise than by performing the duties of it? And what Christian duty is more essentially so than that of charity? And what object can be found upon earth more deserving our charity than the souls of men? Or how is it possible for the most beneficent spirit to do them better service than by promoting their best and most lasting interest, that is, by putting them in the way that leads to Eternal Life?

What this Eternal Life was, or how to come at it, were points unknown to the heathen world. It must be owned, the wise men of old, who followed the light of nature, saw, even by that light, that the soul of man was debased, and borne downwards, contrary to its natural bent, by carnal and terrene objects; and that, on the other hand, it was exalted, purged, and in some sort assimilated to the Deity, by the contemplation of truth and practice of virtue. Thus much in general they saw or surmised. But then about the way and means to know the one, or perform the other, they were much at a loss. They were not agreed concerning the true end of mankind; which, as they saw, was mistaken in the vulgar pursuits of men; so they found it much more easy to confute the errors of others than to ascertain the truth themselves. Hence so many divisions and disputes about a point which it most imported them to know, insomuch as it was to give the bias to human life, and govern the whole tenor of their actions and conduct.

But when Life and Immortality were brought to light by the Gospel, there could remain no dispute about the chief end and felicity of man, no more than there could about the means of obtaining it, after the express declaration of our blessed Lord in the words of my text—"This is Life Eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." For the right understanding of which words we must observe that by the *knowledge* of God is not meant a barren speculation, either of philosophers or scholastic divines, nor any notional tenets fitted to produce disputes and dissensions among men; but, on the contrary, a holy practical knowledge, which is the source, the root, or principle of peace and union, of faith, hope, charity, and universal obedience. A man may frame the most accurate notions, and in one sense attain the exactest knowledge of

Digitized by Google

God and Christ that human faculties can reach, and yet, notwithstanding all this, be far from knowing them in that saving sense. For St. John tells us, that "whosoever sinneth hath not seen Christ, nor known him" (John iii. 6). And again, "He that loveth not knoweth not God" (1 John iv. 8). To know God as we ought, we must love him; and love him so as withal to love our brethren, his creatures and his children. I say, that knowledge of God and Christ which is Life Eternal implies universal charity, with all the duties ingrafted thereon, or ensuing from thence; that is to say, the love of God and man. And our Lord expressly saith, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John xiv. 21). From all which it is evident that this saving knowledge of God is inseparable from the knowledge and practice of his will; the explicit declaration whereof, and of the means to perform it are contained in the gospel, that Divine instrument of grace and mercy to the sons of men. The metaphysical knowledge of God, considered in his absolute nature or essence, is one thing, and to know him as he stands related to us as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier is another. The former kind of knowledge (whatever it amounts to) hath been, and may be, in Gentiles as well as Christians, but not the latter, which is Life Eternal.

From what hath been said, it is a plain consequence that whoever is a sincere Christian cannot be indifferent about bringing over other men to the knowledge of God and Christ; but that every one of us, who hath any claim to that title, is indispensably obliged, in duty to God and in charity to his neighbour, to desire and promote, so far as there is opportunity, the conversion of heathens and infidels, that so they may become partakers of Life and Immortality. For "this is Life Eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

In my present discourse upon which words, I shall,

First, Consider in general the obligation that Christians lie under, of bringing other men to the Knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ. And,

Secondly, I shall consider it in reference to this laudable Society, instituted for the Propagation of the Gospel.

Digitized by Google

And, under each head, I propose to obviate such difficulties as may seem to retard, and intermix such remarks as shall appear proper to forward so good a work.

Now, although it be very evident that we can really have neither a just zeal for the glory of God, nor a beneficent love of man, without wishing and endeavouring, as occasion serves, to spread the glad tidings of salvation, and bring those who are benighted in the shadow of death to Life Eternal, by the Knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; yet this duty, plain and undoubted as it seems, happens to be too often overlooked, even by those whose attention to other points would make one think their neglect of this not an effect of lukewarm indifference so much as of certain mistaken notions and suppositions. Two principal considerations occur, which, in this particular, seem to have slackened the industry of some, otherwise zealous and serious Christians.

One I apprehend to be this, that it is surmised the Christian religion is in a declining state, which by many symptoms seems likely to end either in popery or a general infidelity. And that of course a prudent person has nothing to do but to make sure of his own salvation, and to acquiesce in the general tendency of things, without being at any fruitless pains to oppose what cannot be prevented, to steer against the stream, or resist a torrent, which, as it flows, gathers strength and rapidity, and in the end will be sure to overflow, and carry all before it. When a man of a desponding and foreboding spirit hath been led, by his observation of the ways of the world and the prevailing humour of our times, to think after this manner, he will be inclined to strengthen this his preconceived opinion, as is usual in other the like cases, by misapplication of Holy Scripture: for instance, by those words of our blessed Saviour, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8), which have been applied to this very purpose, as importing that, before the final judgment, Christian faith should be extinguished upon earth: although these words do, from the context, seem plainly to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the obstinate blindness of the Jews, who,

Digitized by Google

even then, when they felt the hand of God, should not acknowledge it, or believe the Roman army to be the instrument of Divine vengeance, in the day of their visitation, by him whom they had injuriously treated, rejected, and put to death.

But, granting the former sense might be supported by no absurd hypothesis, or no improbable guess, yet shall the endeavours of Christian men for propagating the gospel of Christ be forestalled by any suppositions or conjectures whatsoever? Admitting, I say, those words regard the future advent of Jesus Christ, yet can any one tell how near or how far off that advent may be? Are not the times and seasons foreknown only to God? And shall we neglect a certain duty to-day, upon an uncertain surmise of what is to come hereafter? This way of thinking might furnish as strong reasons against preaching at home as abroad, within as without the pale of the church. It would be as specious an argument against the one as the other, but in reality can conclude against neither. For, as we know not when that supposed time of general infidelity is to be, or whether it will be at all; so, if it were ever so sure, and ever so near, it would nevertheless become us to take care that it may not be an effect of our own particular indifference and neglect.

But, if we take our notions, not from the uncertain interpretation of a particular text, but from the whole tenor of the Divine oracles, from the express promise and reiterated predictions of our blessed Lord and his apostles, we shall believe, that "Jesus Christ is highly exalted of God; to the end, that at his name every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that he is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9—11). That "he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. xv. 25). That "he is with us alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20). And that the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth, is so far from being destroyed by human means, "that the gates of hell (all the infernal powers) shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18). Let us therefore banish all such conceits as may seem to justify our indolence, as may reason us out of all courage and vigour in the race that is set before us; let us not, I say, slacken our own hands, nor enfeeble our own knees, by preconceived fancies and suppositions,

Digitized by Google

considering that as the success of all enterprises in great measure depends on the spirit of the undertakers, so nothing is more apt to raise a spirit than hope; nor to depress it than despondency. We ought therefore to shake off every vain fear in our spiritual warfare. The number, the presumption, and the abilities of those who take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed should not dishearten, but rather excite and encourage us to stand in the gap.

Another consideration that may possibly withhold divers sincere believers from contributing their endeavours for bringing men to the knowledge of God and Christ, and thereby to Eternal Life, is the want of Miracles in the present age. Men naturally cast about for reasons to countenance the part they take. And as the gift of miracles was of mighty influence and help to those who were commissioned to spread abroad the light of the gospel in its first promulgation, so no pretence offers itself more naturally to excuse a man from executing any purpose than the want of authority, which, in the opinion of men, cannot be without a just commission, nor this unless distinguished by those proper means and powers that have been known to attend it. Now, with regard to this defect of miracles, I shall beg leave to make two observations:

First, It is to be observed that if we have not miracles we have other advantages which make them less necessary now than in the first spreading of the gospel. Whole nations have found the benefit of Christ's religion; it is protected by princes, established and encouraged by laws, supported by learning and arts, recommended by the experience of many ages, as well as by the authority and example of the wisest and most knowing men. Certainly, if the greatest part of mankind are Gentiles or Mahometans, it cannot be denied that the most knowing, most learned, and most improved nations profess Christianity, and that even the Mahometans themselves bear testimony to the Divine mission of Jesus Christ. Whereas, therefore, in the beginning a few illiterate wanderers, of the meanest of the people, had the prejudices, the learning, and the power of their own as well as other nations, in one word, the whole world, to oppose and overcome: those who at this day engage in the propagation of the gospel, do it upon terms in many respects far more easy and

Digitized by Google

advantageous. It is power against weakness, civility against barbarism, knowledge against ignorance, some or other if not all these advantages, in the present times, attending the progress of the Christian religion, in whatever part of the world men shall attempt to plant it.

In the Second place, we may reflect that if we have not the gift of miracles this is a good reason why we should exert more strongly those human means which God hath put in our power; and make our ordinary faculties, whether of the head, or the hand, or the tongue, our interest, our credit, or our fortune, subservient to the great Giver of them; and cheerfully contribute our humble mite towards hastening that time wherein "all nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name" (Psal. lxxxvi. 9). It is at least a plain case, that the want of apostolical gifts should not be pleaded as a bar to our doing that which in no respect, either of difficulty or danger, equals or approaches the apostolic office. What pretence can this supply for men's being quite unconcerned about the spreading of the gospel, or the salvation of souls; for men's forgetting that they are Christians, and related to human kind? How can this justify their overlooking opportunities which lie in their way, their not contributing a small part of their fortune towards forwarding a design wherein they share neither pains nor peril; the not bestowing on it even the cheap assistance of their speech, attention, counsel, or countenance, as occasion offers? How unlike is this worldly, selfish indifference to that account which St. Paul gives of himself, that "he sought not his own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. x. 33). And yet herein he expected the Corinthians (and the same reason will hold for us) should be like him; for he subjoins, "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ."

Having considered the duty in general, I come now to treat of it with reference to America, the peculiar province of this venerable Society; which I suppose well informed of the state and progress of religion in that part of the world, by their correspondences with the clergy upon their mission. It may nevertheless be expected that one who had been engaged in a design upon this very view, who hath been upon the place, and resided a considerable time in one of our Colonies,

Digitized by Google

should have observed somewhat worth reporting. It is to be hoped, therefore, that one part of my audience will pardon what the other may perhaps expect, while I detain them with the narrative of a few things I have observed, and such reflexions as thereupon suggested themselves; some part of which may possibly be found to extend to other Colonies.

Rhode Island, with a portion of the adjacent Continent under the same government, is inhabited by an English Colony, consisting chiefly of sectaries of many different denominations, who seem to have worn off part of that prejudice which they inherited from their ancestors against the national Church of this land; though it must be acknowledged at the same time, that too many of them have worn off a serious sense of all religion. Several indeed of the better sort are accustomed to assemble themselves regularly on the Lord's day for the performance of divine worship; but most of those who are dispersed throughout this colony seem to rival some well-bred people of other countries in a thorough indifference for all that is sacred, being equally careless of outward worship, and of inward principles, whether of faith or practice. Of the bulk of them it may certainly be said that they live without the sacraments, not being so much as baptized: and as for their morals, I apprehend there is nothing to be found in them that should tempt others to make an experiment of their principles, either in religion or government. But it must be owned, the general behaviour of the inhabitants in those towns where churches and meetings have been long settled and regularly attended seems so much better as sufficiently to show the difference which a solemn regular worship of God makes between persons of the same blood, temper, and natural faculties.

The native Indians, who are said to have been formerly many thousands, within the compass of this colony, do not at present amount to one thousand, including every age and sex. And these are either all servants or labourers for the English, who have contributed more to destroy their bodies by the use of strong liquors than by any means to improve their minds or save their souls. This slow poison, jointly operating with the small-pox, and their wars (but much more destructive than both), have consumed the Indians, not only

Digitized by Google

in our Colonies, but also far and wide upon our confines. And, having made havoc of them, is now doing the same thing by those who taught them that odious vice.

The negroes in the government of Rhode Island are about half as many more than the Indians; and both together scarce amount to a seventh part of the whole Colony. The religion of these people, as is natural to suppose, takes after that of their masters. Some few are baptized; several frequent the different assemblies: and far the greater part none at all. An ancient antipathy to the Indians, whom, it seems, our first planters (therein as in certain other particulars affecting to imitate Jews rather than Christians) imagined they had a right to treat on the foot of Canaanites or Amalekites, together with an irrational contempt of the blacks, as creatures of another species, who had no right to be instructed or admitted to the sacraments, have proved a main obstacle to the conversion of these poor people.

To this may be added, an erroneous notion that the being baptized is inconsistent with a state of slavery. To undeceive them in this particular, which had too much weight, it seemed a proper step, if the opinion of his Majesty's Attorney and Solicitor-General could be procured. This opinion they charitably sent over, signed with their own hands; which was accordingly printed in Rhode Island, and dispersed throughout the Plantations. I heartily wish it may produce the intended effect. It must be owned, our reformed planters, with respect to the natives and the slaves, might learn from those of the Church of Rome, how it is their interest and duty to behave. Both French and Spaniards have intermarried with Indians, to the great strength, security, and increase, of their Colonies. They take care to instruct both them and their negroes in the popish religion, to the reproach of those who profess a better. They have also bishops and seminaries for clergy; and it is not found that their Colonies are worse subjects, or depend less on their mother-country, on that account.

It should seem, that the likeliest step towards converting the heathen would be to begin with the English planters; whose influence will for ever be an obstacle to propagating the gospel, till they have a right sense of it themselves, which would shew them how much it is their duty to impart

Digitized by Google

it to others. The missionaries employed by this venerable Society have done, and continue to do, good service, in bringing those planters to a serious sense of religion, which, it is hoped, will in time extend to others. I speak it knowingly, that the ministers of the gospel, in those provinces which go by the name of New England, sent and supported at the expense of this Society, have, by their sobriety of manners, discreet behaviour, and a competent degree of useful knowledge, shewn themselves worthy the choice of those who sent them; and particularly in living on a more friendly foot with their brethren of the separation; who, on their part, were also very much come off from that narrowness of spirit which formerly kept them at such an unamicable distance from us. And as there is reason to apprehend that part of America could not have been thus distinguished, and provided with such a number of proper persons, if one half of them had not been supplied out of the dissenting seminaries of the country, who, in proportion as they attain to more liberal improvements of learning, are observed to quit their prejudice towards an episcopal church: so I verily think it might increase the number of such useful men, if provision were made to defray their charges in coming hither to receive holy orders; passing and repassing the ocean, and tarrying the necessary time in London, requiring an expense that many are not able to bear. It would also be an encouragement to the missionaries in general, and probably produce good effects, if the allowance of certain missionaries were augmented, in proportion to the services they had done, and the time they had spent in their mission. These hints I venture to suggest, as not unuseful in an age wherein all human encouragements are found more necessary than at the first propagation of the gospel. But they are, with all due deference and respect, submitted to the judgment of this venerable audience.

After all, it is hardly to be expected that, so long as Infidelity prevails at home, the Christian religion should thrive and flourish in our Colonies abroad. Mankind, it must be owned, left to themselves, are so much bewildered and benighted with respect to the origin of that evil which they feel, and from which they are at a loss about the means of

Digitized by Google

being freed, that the doctrines of the lapsed state of man, his reconciliation by Christ, and regeneration by the Spirit, may reasonably be hoped to find an easy admission, as bringing with them light and comfort, into a mind not hardened by impenitency, nor foreclosed by pride, nor biassed by prejudice. But such is the vanity of man that no prejudice operates more powerfully than that in favour of fashion; and no fashions are so much followed by our Colonies as those of the mother-country, which they often adopt in their modes of living, to their great inconvenience, without allowing for the disparity of circumstance or climate. This same humour hath made Infidelity (as I find it too credibly reported) spread in some of our wealthy Plantations; uneducated men being more apt to tread in the steps of libertines and men of fashion, than to model themselves by the laws and institutions of their mother-country, or the lives and professions of the virtuous and religious part of it.

But this is not all. While those abroad are less disposed to receive, some at home are, perhaps, less disposed to propagate the gospel, from the same cause. It is to be feared, I say, that the prevailing torrent of Infidelity, which staggers the faith of some, may cool the zeal and damp the spirit of others, who, judging from the event and success of those who impugn the Church of Christ, may possibly entertain some scruple or surmise, whether it may not be, for the present at least, abandoned by Providence, and that human care must ineffectually interpose, till it shall please God, "yet once more to shake not the earth only, but also the heavens." This point hath been touched before, but deserves farther consideration: to the end, that the peculiar impiety of a profane age, may not be a bar to those very endeavours, which itself renders more necessary, and calls for more loudly now than ever.

Whatever man may think, the arm of the Lord is not shortened. In all this prevalency of Atheism and Irreligion, there is no advantage gained by the powers of darkness, either against God, or godly men, but only against their own wretched partisans. The Christian dispensation, is a dispensation of grace and favour. The Christian Church a society of men entitled to this grace, on performing certain conditions. If this society is diminished, as those who

Digitized by Google

remain true members of it suffer no loss to themselves, so God loseth no right, suffereth no detriment, foregoeth no good; his grace resisted or unfruitful being no more lost to him than the light of the sun shining on desert places, or among people who shut their eyes.

Besides, this excess, this unstemmed torrent of profaneness, may possibly, in the conclusion, defeat itself, confirm what it meant to extirpate, and, instead of destroying, prove a means of preserving our religion; the evil fruits and effects thereof being so notorious and flagrant, and so sensibly felt, as in all likelihood to be able to open the eyes and rouse the attention of those who may be blind and deaf to every argument and consideration. Or, who knows but the Christian Church, corrupted by prosperity, is to be restored and purified by adversity? which may prove, for aught we can tell, as salutary in future as it hath been in past ages. Many insolent and presumptuous foes have set themselves against the Church of God; whose hook nevertheless may be in their nostrils, and his bridle in their lips, managing and governing even their rage and folly to the fulfilling of his own wise purposes; and who may not fail in the end to deal by them as he did by the king of Assyria, when he had "performed his work upon Sion and upon Jerusalem, punishing their stout heart and high looks" (Isa. x. 12). This presumptuous conqueror was, without knowing it, a tool or instrument in the hands of that God whom he blasphemed. "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger! I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few" (Isa. x. 5—7).

Thus much at least is evident: it is no new thing that great enormities should produce great humiliations, and these again noble virtues, which have often recovered both single men, and whole states, even in a natural and civil sense. And if the captivities, distresses, and desolations of the Jewish church have occasioned their return to God, and reinstated them in his favour; nay, if it was actually foretold, whenever they lay under the curse of God, at the mercy of

Digitized by Google

their enemies, peeled and scattered in a foreign land, that nevertheless upon their calling his covenant to mind, and returning to him, "the Lord their God would turn their captivity and have compassion upon them" (Deut. xxx. 3). —I say, if things were so, why may we not in reason hope for something analogous thereto in behalf of the Christian Church. It cannot be denied, that there was a great analogy between the Jewish institutions, and the doctrines of the gospel; for instance, between the paschal lamb, and the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world; between the Egyptian bondage, and that of sin; the earthly Canaan, and the heavenly; the fleshly circumcision, and the spiritual. In these and many other particulars the analogy seems so plain that it can hardly be disputed. To be convinced that the law of Moses and the Jewish economy were figures and shadows of the evangelical, we need only look into the Epistle to the Hebrews. May we not therefore, in pursuance of this same analogy, suppose a similar treatment of the Jewish and Christian Church?

Let us then see, on what terms the former stood with God, in order to discover what the latter may reasonably expect. The solemn denunciation to the Jews was, "If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth" (Deut. xxviii. 1). But, in case of disobedience, it is added among many other threats and maledictions, "The Lord shall smite thee with blasting and with mildew: and thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron" (Deut. xxviii. 22, 23). And again, "The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart" (Deut. xxviii. 28). Have not the people of this land drawn down upon it, by more ways than one, the just judgments of Heaven? Surely we have felt in a metaphor the first of the forementioned judgments; and the last hath been literally fulfilled upon us. Is it not visible that we are less knowing, less virtuous, less reasonable, in proportion as we are less religious? Are we not grown drunk and giddy with vice, and vanity, and presumption, and free-thinking, and extravagance of every kind, to a degree that we may truly be

Digitized by Google

said to be smitten with "madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart?"

As anciently most unchristian schisms and disputes, joined with great corruption of manners, made way for the Mahometan in the east, and the papal dominion in the west; even so here at home in the last century, a weak reliance upon human politics and power on the one hand, and enthusiastic rage on the other, together with carnal mindedness on both, gave occasion to introduce Atheism and Infidelity. If the temporal state and outward form of the Jewish church was, upon their defection, overturned by invaders; in like manner, when Christians are no longer governed by the light of evangelical truth, when we resist the Spirit of God, are we not to expect that "the heaven above will be as brass," that the Divine grace will no longer shower down on our obdurate hearts, that our Church and profession will be blasted by licentious scorners, those madmen who in sport scatter firebrands, arrows, and death? As all this is no more than we may reasonably suppose will ensue upon our backsliding, so we may, with equal reason, hope it will be remedied upon our return to God.

From what hath been said it follows, that in order to propagate the Gospel abroad, it is necessary we do it at home, and extend our charity to domestic infidels, if we would convert or prevent foreign ones. So that a view of the declining state of religion here at home, of those things that produced this declension, and of the proper methods to repair it, is naturally connected with the subject of this discourse. I shall therefore beg your patience, while I just mention a few remarks or hints, too obvious, perhaps, in themselves to be new or unknown to any present, but too little visible in their effects to make one think they are, by all, much attended to.

Some, preferring points notional or ritual to the love of God and man, consider the national Church only as it stands opposed to other Christian societies. These generally have a zeal without knowledge, and the effects are suitable to the cause; they really hurt what they seem to espouse. Others, more solicitous about the discovery of truth than the practice of holiness, employ themselves rather to spy out errors in the Church than enforce its precepts. These, it is to be feared, postpone the great interests of religion to points of less con-

Digitized by Google

cern in any eyes but their own. But surely they would do well to consider that an humble, though confused and indistinct, faith, in the bond of charity, and productive of good works, is much more evangelical than any accurate disputing and conceited knowledge.

A Church which contains the fundamentals, and nothing subversive of those fundamentals, is not to be set at nought by any particular member; because it may not, in every point, perhaps, correspond with his ideas, no, not though he is sure of being in the right. Probably there never was, or will be, an established Church in this world without visible marks of humanity upon it. St. Paul supposeth that, "on the foundation of Jesus Christ there will be human superstructures of hay and stubble" (1 Cor. iii. 12), things light and trivial, wrong or superstitious, which indeed is a natural consequence of the weakness and ignorance of man. But where that living foundation is rightly laid in the mind, there will not fail to grow and spring from thence those virtues and graces, which are the genuine effects and tokens of true faith, and which are by no means inconsistent with every error in theory, or every needless rite in worship.

The Christian religion was calculated for the bulk of mankind, and therefore cannot reasonably be supposed to consist in subtle and nice notions. From the time that divinity was considered as a science, and human reason enthroned in the sanctuary of God, the hearts of its professors seem to have been less under the influence of grace. From that time have grown many unchristian dissensions and controversies, of men "knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmises, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of truth" (1 Tim. vi. 4, 5). Doubtless, the making religion a notional thing hath been of infinite disservice. And whereas its holy mysteries are rather to be received with humility of faith, than defined and measured by the accuracy of human reason; all attempts of this kind, however well intended, have visibly failed in the event; and, instead of reconciling infidels, have, by creating disputes and heats among the professors of Christianity, given no small advantage to its enemies.

To conclude: if we proportioned our zeal to the import-



Digitized by Google

ance of things; if we could love men whose opinions we do not approve; if we knew the world more and liked it less; if we had a due sense of the Divine perfection and our own defects; if our chief study was the wisdom from above, described by St. Paul; and if, in order to all this, that were done in places of education which cannot be done so well out of them: I say, if these steps were taken at home, while proper measures are carrying on abroad, the one would very much forward or facilitate the other. As it is not meant so it must not be understood, that foreign attempts should wait for domestic success, but only that it is to be wished they may co-operate. Certainly if a just and rational, a genuine and sincere, a warm and vigorous piety, animated the Mother-country, the influence thereof would soon reach our foreign Plantations, and extend throughout their borders. We should soon see religion shine forth with new lustre and force, to the conversion of infidels, both at home and abroad, and to "the casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 5).

To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all praise, might, majesty, and dominion, now and for ever.

Digitized by Google

# ALCIPHRON:

## OR, THE MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.

1732.

Digitized by Google

[IT will have been noticed that in this volume all the works up to the present have contained denunciations of a prevailing levity and freedom of thought in religion. This "demi-atheism" in the case of most part of its professors was no result of earnest investigation, but a fashionable whim reared on fallacy and sustained by ridicule. It was the spirit of the age, or at least of the coffee-houses; and the writings of Tindal, Collins, Mandeville, and Shaftesbury had all variously helped to quicken it. Differing widely as they did, these writers met on a common ground of opposition, avowed or implied to the Christian faith; and so, whatever religious ideas they may have had, to Berkeley they were all atheists. He resolved on opposition, and in the solitudes of Rhode Island—it is believed—he wrote this work, his defence of the Christian religion.

It appeared in Dublin and London in 1732, soon after the return of Berkeley from America; and later in the same year, a second edition was published in London. Each of these issues was in two volumes, the first containing Dial. I.-V., and the second Dial. VI. and VII., and the "Theory of Vision." In 1752 a third edition in one volume of "Alciphron" alone was published in London. Two distinct forms of this edition exist. In appearance they are identical, but in contents they differ considerably. One is a very careless reprint of the first edition, full of obvious errors, while the other contains a most carefully revised text. The most notable modification is the omission of sects. 5-7 of Dial. VII. with a consequent renumbering of the sections. Strangely enough, while the revised numbering appears correctly in both indexes, the original scheme is reverted to in the body of the text by an accidental misnumbering of sects. 21 *et seq.* The present text is based on this latest version, which appears for the first time in a collected edition of Berkeley's works. The first American edition of "Alciphron" (New Haven, 1803) is also a reprint of the text of 1752.

"Alciphron" was, and is likely to be, the most generally enjoyed of Berkeley's volumes. It is simple and variously entertaining with merits that far out-balance its defects. It has to be remembered that "Alciphron" is not directed against the specific doctrines of Deists or Atheists, so much as against the general influence of such writers on people unwilling to think for themselves, yet willing because of their more than doubtful lives to deny the existence of God. Deep and close argument throughout would have helped his special object but little; and those who condemn the work as shallow seem to forget this. The "Analogy" of Butler and the "Alciphron" of Berkeley are as different in special aim as any two works on one subject can possibly be; and to expect the same result from each is strangely perverse and unreasonable. Were its philosophical value even less, it would still be eagerly read, for in an age of delicate and symmetrical prose, it stands distinguished by its delicacy and its symmetry.]

Digitized by Google

# *ALCIPHRON:*

## OR, THE

# MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.

## IN

# SEVEN DIALOGUES.

*Containing an* APOLOGY *for the* Chriſtian Religion, *againſt thoſe who are called* Free-thinkers.

VOLUME *the* FIRST.

*They have forſaken me the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns that can hold no water.* Jerem. ii. 13.

*Sin mortuus, ut quidam minuti Philoſophi cenſent, nihil ſentiam, non vereor ne hunc errorem meum mortui Philoſophi irrideant.*
Cicero.

*LONDON:*
Printed for J. TONSON in the *Strand*, 1732.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

# ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author's design being to consider the Free-thinker in the various lights of atheist, libertine, enthusiast, scorner, critic, metaphysician, fatalist, and sceptic, it must not therefore be imagined that every one of these characters agrees with every individual Free-thinker; no more being implied than that each part agrees with some or other of the sect. There may, possibly, be a reader who shall think the character of atheist agrees with none; but though it hath been often said there is no such thing as a speculative atheist, yet we must allow there are several atheists who pretend to speculation. This the Author knows to be true; and is well assured that one of the most noted writers against Christianity in our times declared he had found out a demonstration against the being of a God.[1] And he doubts not, whoever will be at the pains to inform himself, by a general conversation, as well as books, of the principles and tenets of our modern Free-thinkers, will see too much cause to be persuaded that nothing in the ensuing characters is beyond the life.[2]

As the author hath not confined himself to write against books alone, so he thinks it necessary to make this declaration. It must not, therefore, be thought that authors are misrepresented, if every notion of Alciphron or Lysicles is not found precisely in them. A gentleman in private con-

[1] This is supposed to refer to the "Philosophical Inquiry concerning Human Liberty" (1717) by Anthony Collins. This little book seeks to prove that man is not a *free* but a *necessary* agent; that is, his actions are the inevitable result of other actions over which he has no control. Collins himself does not openly apply this doctrine to demonstrate the uselessness of a God. See Dial. vii., sects. 16-20, and "T. of V. Vindicated," sect. 6.—ED.

[2] The two following paragraphs appeared first in the second edition.

Digitized by Google

ference, may be supposed to speak plainer than others write, to improve on their hints, and draw conclusions from their principles.

Whatever they pretend, it is the author's opinion that all those who write either explicitly or by insinuation, against the dignity, freedom, and immortality of the Human Soul, may so far forth be justly said to unhinge the Principles of Morality, and destroy the means of making men reasonably virtuous. Much is to be apprehended from that quarter against the interests of virtue. Whether the apprehension of a certain admired writer,[1] that the cause of virtue is likely to suffer less from its witty antagonists than from its tender nurses, who are apt to overlay it, and kill it with excess of care and cherishing, and make it a mercenary thing, by talking so much of its reward—whether, I say, this apprehension be so well founded, the reader must determine.[2]

[1] "Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour," Part II., sect. 3. (Shaftesbury.—ED.)

[2] In the first two editions there came this paragraph:

As for the Treatise concerning Vision, why the Author annexed it to the "Minute Philosopher" will appear upon perusal of the Fourth Dialogue.

The last edition did not contain the Essay on Vision.—ED.

Digitized by Google

# CONTENTS.

## THE FIRST DIALOGUE.

SECT.
1. Introduction.
2. Aim and endeavours of free-thinkers.
3. Opposed by the clergy.
4. Liberty of free-thinking.
5. Farther account of the views of free-thinkers.
6. The progress of a free-thinker towards atheism.
7. Joint imposture of the priest and magistrate.
8. The free-thinker's method in making converts and discoveries.
9. The atheist alone free. His sense of natural good and evil.
10. Modern free-thinkers more properly named minute philosophers.
11. Minute philosophers, what sort of men, and how educated.
12. Their numbers, progress, and tenets.
13. Compared with other philosophers.

14. What things and notions to be esteemed natural.
15. Truth the same, notwithstanding diversity of opinions.
16. Rule and measure of moral truths.

## THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

1. Vulgar error—That vice is hurtful.
2. The benefit of drunkenness, gaming, and whoring.
3. Prejudice against vice wearing off.
4. Its usefulness illustrated in the instances of Callicles and Telesilla.
5. The reasoning of Lysicles in behalf of vice examined.
6. Wrong to punish actions, when the doctrines whence they flow are tolerated.
7. Hazardous experiment of the minute philosophers.
8. Their doctrine of circulation and revolution.
9. Their sense of a reformation.
10. Riches alone not the public weal.
11. Authority of minute philosophers: their prejudice against religion.
12. Effects of luxury: virtue, whether notional?
13. Pleasure of sense.
14. What sort of pleasure most natural to man.
15. Dignity of human nature.
16. Pleasure mistaken.

Digitized by Google

SECT.
17. Amusements, misery, and cowardice of minute philosophers.
18. Rakes cannot reckon.
19. Abilities and success of minute philosophers.
20. Happy effects of the minute philosophy in particular instances.
21. Their free notions about government.
22. England the proper soil for minute philosophy.
23. The policy and address of its professors.
24. Merit of minute philosophers towards the public.
25. Their notions and character.
26. Their tendency towards popery and slavery.

## THE THIRD DIALOGUE.

1. Alciphron's account of honour.
2. Character and conduct of men of honour.

3. Sense of moral beauty.
4. The *honestum* or τὸ καλὸν of the ancients.
5. Taste for moral beauty, whether a sure guide or rule.
6. Minute philosophers ravished with the abstract beauty of virtue.
7. Their virtue alone disinterested and heroic.
8. Beauty of sensible objects, what, and how perceived.
9. The idea of beauty explained by painting and architecture.
10. Beauty of the moral system, wherein it consists.
11. It supposeth a Providence.
12. Influence of τὸ καλὸν and τὸ πρέπον.
13. Enthusiasm of Cratylus compared with the sentiments of Aristotle.
14. Compared with the Stoical principles.
15. Minute philosophers, their talent for raillery and ridicule.
16. The wisdom of those who make virtue alone its own reward.

## THE FOURTH DIALOGUE.

1. Prejudices concerning a Deity.
2. Rules laid down by Alciphron to be observed in proving a God.
3. What sort of proof he expects.
4. Whence we collect the being of other thinking individuals.
5. The same method *à fortiori* proves the being of God.
6. Alciphron's second thoughts on this point.
7. God speaks to men.

8. How distance is perceived by sight.
9. The proper objects of sight at no distance.
10. Lights, shades, and colours variously combined form a language.
11. The signification of this language learned by experience.
12. God explaineth Himself to the eyes of men by the arbitrary use of sensible signs.
13. The prejudice and twofold aspect of a minute philosopher.

Digitized by Google

SECT.
14. God present to mankind, informs, admonishes, and directs them in a sensible manner.
15. Admirable nature and use of this Visual Language.
16. Minute philosophers content to admit a God in certain senses.
17. Opinion of some who hold that knowledge and wisdom are not properly in God.
18. Dangerous tendency of this notion.
19. Its original.
20. The sense of schoolmen upon it.
21. Scholastic use of the terms Analogy and Analogical explained: analogical perfections of God misunderstood.
22. God intelligent, wise, and good in the proper sense of the words.
23. Objection from moral evil considered.
24. Men argue from their own defects against a Deity.
25. Religious worship reasonable and expedient.

## THE FIFTH DIALOGUE.

1. Minute philosophers join in the cry, and follow the scent of others.
2. Worship prescribed by the Christian religion suitable to God and man.
3. Power and influence of the Druids.
4. Excellency and usefulness of the Christian religion.
5. It ennobles mankind, and makes them happy.
6. Religion neither bigotry nor superstition.
7. Physicians and physic for the soul.
8. Character of the Clergy.
9. Natural religion and human reason not to be disparaged.
10. Tendency and use of the Gentile religion.
11. Good effects of Christianity.
12. Englishmen compared with ancient Greeks and Romans.
13. The modern practice of duelling.
14. Character of the old Romans, how to be formed.
15. Genuine fruits of the Gospel.
16. Wars and factions not an effect of the Christian religion.
17. Civil rage and massacres in Greece and Rome.
18. Virtue of ancient Greeks.
19. Quarrels of polemical divines.
20. Tyranny, usurpation, sophistry of ecclesiastics.
21. The Universities censured.
22. Divine writings of a certain modern critic.
23. Learning the effect of religion.
24. Barbarism of the schools.
25. Restoration of learning and polite arts, to whom owing.
26. Prejudice and ingratitude of minute philosophers.
27. Their pretensions and conduct inconsistent.
28. Men and brutes compared with respect to religion.
29. Christianity the only means to establish natural religion.
30. Free-thinkers mistake their talents; have a strong imagination.
31. Tithes and church-lands.

Digitized by Google

SECT.
32. Men distinguished from human creatures.
33. Distribution of mankind into birds, beasts, and fishes.
34. Plea for reason allowed, but unfairness taxed.
35. Freedom a blessing or a curse as it is used.
36. Priestcraft not the reigning evil.

## THE SIXTH DIALOGUE.

1. Points agreed.
2. Sundry pretences to revelation.
3. Uncertainty of tradition.
4. Object and ground of faith.
5. Some books disputed, others evidently spurious.
6. Style and composition of Holy Scripture.
7. Difficulties occurring therein.
8. Obscurity not always a defect.
9. Inspiration neither impossible nor absurd.
10. Objections from the form and matter of Divine revelation considered.
11. Infidelity an effect of narrowness and prejudice.
12. Articles of Christian faith not unreasonable.
13. Guilt the natural parent of fear.
14. Things unknown, reduced to the standard of what men know.
15. Prejudices against the Incarnation of the Son of God.
16. Ignorance of the Divine Œconomy, a source of difficulties.
17. Wisdom of God, foolishness to man.
18. Reason, no blind guide.
19. Usefulness of Divine revelation.
20. Prophecies, whence obscure.
21. Eastern accounts of time older than the Mosaic.
22. The humour of Ægyptians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and other nations extending their antiquity beyond truth accounted for.
23. Reasons confirming the Mosaic account.
24. Profane historians inconsistent.
25. Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian.
26. The testimony of Josephus considered.
27. Attestation of Jews and Gentiles to Christianity.
28. Forgeries and heresies.
29. Judgment and attention of minute philosophers.
30. Faith and miracles.
31. Probable arguments a sufficient ground of faith.
32. The Christian religion able to stand the test of rational inquiry.

## THE SEVENTH DIALOGUE.

1. Christian faith impossible.
2. Words stand for ideas.
3. No knowledge or faith without ideas.
4. Grace, no idea of it.

Digitized by Google

SECT.

[5. Abstract ideas what and how made.
6. Abstract general ideas impossible.
7. In what sense there may be general ideas.[1]]
5 [ 8]. Suggesting ideas not the only use of words.

6 [ 9]. Force as difficult to form an idea of as grace.
7 [10]. Notwithstanding which useful propositions may be formed concerning it.
8 [11]. Belief of the Trinity and other mysteries not absurd.
9 [12]. Mistakes about faith an occasion of profane raillery.
10 [13]. Faith, its true nature and effects.
11 [14]. Illustrated by science.
12 [15]. By arithmetic in particular.
13 [16]. Sciences conversant about signs.
14 [17]. The true end of speech, reason, science, and faith.
15 [18]. Metaphysical objections as strong against human sciences as articles of faith.

16 [19]. No religion, because no human liberty.
17 [20]. Farther proof against human liberty.
18 [21]. Fatalism a consequence of erroneous suppositions.
19 [22]. Man an accountable agent.
20 [23]. Inconsistency, singularity, and credulity of minute philosophers.

21 [24]. Untrodden paths and new light of the minute philosophers.
22 [25]. Sophistry of the minute philosophers.
23 [26]. Minute philosophers ambiguous, ænigmatical, unfathomable.
24 [27]. Scepticism of the minute philosophers.
25 [28]. How a sceptic ought to behave.

26 [29]. Minute philosophers why difficult to convince.
27 [30]. Thinking not the epidemical evil of these times.
28 [31]. Infidelity not an effect of reason or thought—its true motives assigned.
29 [32]. Variety of opinions about religion, effects thereof.
30 [33]. Method for proceeding with minute philosophers.
31 [34]. Want of thought and want of education defects of the present age.

---

[1] The titles of the omitted sections and the original numbers are retained in brackets for convenience of reference to other editions.—ED.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

# THE MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.

## THE FIRST DIALOGUE.[1]

1. Introduction. 2. Aim and endeavours of free-thinkers. 3. Opposed by the clergy. 4. Liberty of free-thinking. 5. Farther account of the views of free-thinkers. 6. The progress of a free-thinker towards atheism. 7. Joint imposture of the priest and magistrate. 8. The free-thinker's method in making converts and discoveries. 9. The atheist alone free. His sense of natural good and evil. 10. Modern free-thinkers more properly named *minute philosophers*. 11. Minute philosophers, what sort of men, and how educated. 12. Their numbers, progress, and tenets. 13. Compared with other philosophers. 14. What things and notions to be esteemed natural. 15. Truth the same, notwithstanding diversity of opinion. 16. Rule and measure of moral truths.

1.

I FLATTERED myself, Theages, that before this time I might have been able to have sent you an agreeable account of the success of the affair which brought me into this remote corner of the country. But, instead of this, I should now give you the detail of its miscarriage, if I did not rather choose to entertain you with some amusing incidents, which have helped to make me easy under a circumstance I could neither obviate nor foresee. Events are not in our power; but it always is, to make a good use even of the very worst. And, I must needs own, the course and event of this affair gave opportunity for reflexions that make me some amends for a great loss of time, pains, and expense. A life of action, which takes its issue from the counsels,

[1] The first dialogue is introductory; it makes us acquainted with the characters and the points at issue. It may be reasonably assumed that the first paragraph contains an allusion to the failure of the Bermuda scheme.—ED.

Digitized by Google

passions, and views of other men, if it doth not draw a man to imitate, will at least teach him to observe. And a mind at liberty to reflect on its own observations, if it produce nothing useful to the world, seldom fails of entertainment to itself. For several months past, I have enjoyed such liberty and leisure in this distant retreat, far beyond the verge of that great whirlpool of business, faction, and pleasure, which is called *the world*. And a retreat in itself agreeable, after a long scene of trouble and disquiet, was made much more so by the conversation and good qualities of my host, Euphranor, who unites in his own person the philosopher and the farmer, two characters not so inconsistent in nature as by custom they seem to be.

Euphranor, from the time he left the university, hath lived in this small town, where he is possessed of a convenient house with a hundred acres of land adjoining to it; which, being improved by his own labour, yield him a plentiful subsistence. He hath a good collection, chiefly of old books, left him by a clergyman his uncle, under whose care he was brought up. And the business of his farm doth not hinder him from making good use of it. He hath read much, and thought more; his health and strength of body enabling him the better to bear fatigue of mind. He is of opinion that he could not carry on his studies with more advantage in the closet than the field, where his mind is seldom idle while he prunes the trees, follows the plough, or looks after his flocks.

In the house of this honest friend I became acquainted with Crito, a neighbouring gentleman of distinguished merit and estate, who lives in great friendship with Euphranor.

Last summer, Crito, whose parish-church is in our town, dining on a Sunday at Euphranor's, I happened to inquire after his guests, whom we had seen at church with him the Sunday before. They are both well, said Crito, but, having once occasionally conformed, to see what sort of assembly our parish could afford, they had no further curiosity to gratify at church, and so chose to stay at home. How, said Euphranor, are they then dissenters? No, replied Crito, they are free-thinkers. Euphranor, who had never met with any of this species or sect of men, and but little of their

Digitized by Google

writings, shewed a great desire to know their principles or system. That is more, said Crito, than I will undertake to tell you. Their writers are of different opinions. Some go farther, and explain themselves more freely than others. But the current general notions of the sect are best learned from conversation with those who profess themselves of it. Your curiosity may now be satisfied, if you and Dion would spend a week at my house with these gentlemen, who seem very ready to declare and propagate their opinions. Alciphron is above forty, and no stranger either to men or books. I knew him first at the Temple, which, upon an estate's falling to him, he quitted, to travel through the polite parts of Europe. Since his return he hath lived in the amusements of the town, which, being grown stale and tasteless to his palate, have flung him into a sort of splenetic indolence. The young gentleman, Lysicles, is a near kinsman of mine, one of lively parts and a general insight into letters, who, after having passed the forms of education, and seen a little of the world, fell into an intimacy with men of pleasure and free-thinkers, I am afraid much to the damage of his constitution and his fortune. But what I most regret is the corruption of his mind, by a set of pernicious principles, which, having been observed to survive the passions of youth, forestall even the remote hopes of amendment. They are both men of fashion, and would be agreeable enough, if they did not fancy themselves free-thinkers. But this, to speak the truth, has given them a certain air and manner, which a little too visibly declare they think themselves wiser than the rest of the world. I should therefore be not at all displeased if my guests met with their match, where they least expected it—in a country farmer. I shall not, replied Euphranor, pretend to any more than barely to inform myself of their principles and opinions. For this end I propose to-morrow to set a week's task to my labourers, and accept your invitation, if Dion thinks good. To which I gave consent. Meanwhile, said Crito, I shall prepare my guests, and let them know that an honest neighbour hath a mind to discourse with them on the subject of their free-thinking. And, if I am not mistaken, they will please themselves with the prospect of leaving a convert behind them, even in a country village.



Digitized by Google

Next morning Euphranor rose early, and spent the forenoon in ordering his affairs. After dinner we took our walk to Crito's, which lay through half-a-dozen pleasant fields planted round with plane trees, that are very common in this part of the country. We walked under the delicious shade of these trees for about an hour before we came to Crito's house, which stands in the middle of a small park, beautified with two fine groves of oak and walnut, and a winding stream of sweet and clear water.[1] We met a servant at the door with a small basket of fruit, which he was carrying into a grove, where he said his master was with the two strangers. We found them all three sitting under a shade. And after the usual forms at first meeting, Euphranor and I sat down by them.

Our conversation began upon the beauty of this rural scene, the fine season of the year, and some late improvements which had been made in the adjacent country by new methods of agriculture. Whence Alciphron took occasion to observe, that the most valuable improvements came latest. I should have small temptation, said he, to live where men have neither polished manners, nor improved minds, though the face of the country were ever so well improved. But I have long observed that there is a gradual progress in human affairs. The first care of mankind is to supply the cravings of nature; in the next place they study the conveniences and comforts of life. But the subduing prejudices, and acquiring true knowledge, that Herculean labour, is the last, being what demands the most perfect abilities, and to which all other advantages are preparative. Right, said Euphranor, Alciphron hath touched our true defect. It was always my opinion that as soon as we had provided subsistence for the body our next care should be to improve the mind. But the desire of wealth steps between, and engrosseth men's thoughts.

2. *Alciphron.* Thought is that which we are told distinguisheth man from beast; and freedom of thought makes as great a difference between man and man. It is to the noble assertors of this privilege and perfection of human kind, the free-thinkers I mean, who have sprung up

[1] A description of the scenery round "Whitehall"—Berkeley's Rhode Island home. (Fraser's "Life," p. 168).—ED.

Digitized by Google

and multiplied of late years, that we are indebted for all those important discoveries, that ocean of light, which hath broke in and made its way, in spite of slavery and superstition.

Euphranor, who is a sincere enemy to both, testified a great esteem for those worthies who had preserved their country from being ruined by them, having spread so much light and knowledge over the land. He added, that he liked the name and character of a free-thinker: but, in his sense of the word, every honest inquirer after truth in any age or country was entitled to it. He therefore desired to know what this sect was that Alciphron had spoken of as newly sprung up; what were their tenets; what were their discoveries; and wherein they employed themselves for the benefit of mankind? Of all which, he should think himself obliged, if Alciphron would inform him.

That I shall very easily, replied Alciphron, for I profess myself one of the number, and my most intimate friends are some of the most considerable among them.

And, perceiving that Euphranor heard him with respect, he proceeded very fluently. You must know, said he, that the mind of man may be fitly compared to a piece of land. What stubbing, ploughing, digging, and harrowing are to the one, that thinking, reflecting, examining are to the other. Each hath its proper culture; and, as land that is suffered to lie waste and wild for a long tract of time will be overspread with brush-wood, brambles, thorns, and such vegetables which have neither use nor beauty; even so there will not fail to sprout up in a neglected uncultivated mind a great number of prejudices and absurd opinions, which owe their origin partly to the soil itself, the passions and imperfections of the mind of man, and partly to those seeds which chance to be scattered in it by every wind of doctrine, which the cunning of statesmen, the singularity of pedants, the superstition of fools, or the imposture of priests shall raise. Represent to yourself the mind of man, or human nature in general, that for so many ages had lain obnoxious to the frauds of designing, and the follies of weak men; how it must be overrun with prejudices and errors, what firm and deep roots they must have taken, and consequently how difficult a task it must be to extirpate them! And yet this work, no less difficult than glorious, is the employment of the modern free-

Digitized by Google

thinkers. Alciphron having said this made a pause, and looked round on the company.

Truly, said I, a very laudable undertaking!

We think, said Euphranor, that it is praiseworthy to clear and subdue the earth, to tame brute animals, to fashion the outsides of men, provide sustenance for their bodies, and cure their maladies. But what is all this in comparison of that most excellent and useful undertaking, to free mankind from their errors, and to improve and adorn their minds? For things of less merit towards the world, altars have been raised, and temples built, in ancient times.

Too many in our days, replied Alciphron, are such fools as not to know their best benefactors from their worst enemies. They have a blind respect for those who enslave them, and look upon their deliverers as a dangerous sort of men that would undermine received principles and opinions.

*Euphranor.* It were a great pity such worthy ingenious men should meet with any discouragement. For my part, I should think a man who spent his time in such a painful, impartial search after truth a better friend to mankind than the greatest statesman or hero; the advantage of whose labours is confined to a little part of the world and a short space of time, whereas a ray of truth may enlighten the whole world and extend to future ages.

*Alc.* It will be some time I fear before the common herd think as you do. But the better sort, the men of parts and polite education, pay a due regard to the patrons of light and truth.

3. *Euph.* The clergy, no doubt, are on all occasions ready to forward and applaud your worthy endeavours.

Upon hearing this Lysicles could hardly refrain from laughing. And Alciphron with an air of pity told Euphranor that he perceived he was unacquainted with the real character of those men. For, saith he, you must know that of all men living they are our greatest enemies. If it were possible, they would extinguish the very light of nature, turn the world into a dungeon, and keep mankind for ever in chains and darkness.

*Euph.* I never imagined anything like this of our Protestant clergy, particularly those of the Established Church, whom,

Digitized by Google

if I may be allowed to judge by what I have seen of them and their writings, I should have thought lovers of learning and useful knowledge.

*Alc.* Take my word for it, priests of all religions are the same: wherever there are priests there will be priestcraft; and wherever there is priestcraft there will be a persecuting spirit, which they never fail to exert to the utmost of their power against all those who have the courage to think for themselves, and will not submit to be hoodwinked and manacled by their reverend leaders. Those great masters of pedantry and jargon have coined several systems, which are all equally true, and of equal importance to the world. The contending sects are each alike fond of their own, and alike prone to discharge their fury upon all who dissent from them. Cruelty and ambition being the darling vices of priests and churchmen all the world over, they endeavour in all countries to get an ascendant over the rest of mankind; and the magistrate, having a joint interest with the priest in subduing, amusing, and scaring the people, too often lends a hand to the hierarchy, who never think their authority and possessions secure, so long as those who differ from them in opinion are allowed to partake even in the common rights belonging to their birth or species. To represent the matter in a true light, figure to yourselves a monster or spectre made up of superstition and enthusiasm, the joint issue of statecraft and priestcraft, rattling chains in one hand, and with the other brandishing a flaming sword over the land, and menacing destruction to all who shall dare to follow the dictates of Reason and Common Sense. Do but consider this, and then say if there was not danger as well as difficulty in our undertaking. Yet, such is the generous ardour that truth inspires, our free-thinkers are neither overcome by the one nor daunted by the other. In spite of both we have already made so many proselytes among the better sort, and their numbers increase so fast, that we hope we shall be able to carry all before us, beat down the bulwarks of all tyranny, secular or ecclesiastical, break the fetters and chains of our countrymen, and restore the original inherent rights, liberties, and prerogatives of mankind.

Euphranor heard this discourse with his mouth open, and his eyes fixed upon Alciphron, who, having uttered it with

Digitized by Google

no small emotion, stopped to draw breath and recover himself; but, finding that nobody made answer, he resumed the thread of his discourse, and, turning to Euphranor, spoke in a lower note what follows:—The more innocent and honest a man is, the more liable is he to be imposed on by the specious pretences of other men. You have probably met with certain writings of our divines that treat of grace, virtue, goodness, and such matters, fit to amuse and deceive a simple, honest mind. But, believe me when I tell you they are all at bottom (however they may gild their designs) united by one common principle in the same interest. I will not deny there may be here and there a poor half-witted man that means no mischief; but this I will be bold to say, that all the men of sense among them are true at bottom to these three pursuits of ambition, avarice, and revenge.

4. While Alciphron was speaking, a servant came to tell him and Lysicles that some men who were going to London waited to receive their orders. Whereupon they both rose up, and went towards the house. They were no sooner gone but Euphranor, addressing himself to Crito, said, he believed that poor gentleman had been a great sufferer for his free-thinking; for that he seemed to express himself with the passion and resentment natural to men who have received very bad usage.

I believe no such thing, answered Crito, but have often observed those of his sect run into two faults of conversation, declaiming and bantering, just as the tragic or the comic humour prevails. Sometimes they work themselves into high passions, and are frightened at spectres of their own raising. In those fits every country curate passes for an inquisitor. At other times they affect a sly facetious manner, making use of hints and allusions, expressing little, insinuating much, and upon the whole seeming to divert themselves with the subject and their adversaries. But, if you would know their opinions, you must make them speak out and keep close to the point. Persecution for free-thinking is a topic they are apt to enlarge on, though without any just cause, every one being at full liberty to think what he pleases, there being no such thing in England that I know as persecution for opinion, sentiment, or thought. But in every

Digitized by Google

country, I suppose, some care is taken to restrain petulant speech, and, whatever men's inward thoughts may be, to discourage an outward contempt of what the public esteemeth sacred. Whether this care in England hath of late been so excessive as to distress the subject of this once free and easy government, whether the free-thinkers can truly complain of any hardship upon the score of conscience or opinion, you will better be able to judge, when you hear from themselves an account of the numbers, progress, and notions of their sect; which I doubt not they will communicate fully and freely, provided nobody present seem shocked or offended: for in that case it is possible good manners may put them upon some reserve.

Oh! said Euphranor, I am never angry with any man for his opinion: whether he be Jew, Turk, or Idolator, he may speak his mind freely to me without fear of offending. I should even be glad to hear what he hath to say, provided he saith it in an ingenuous candid manner. Whoever digs in the mine of truth I look on as my fellow-labourer; but if, while I am taking true pains, he diverts himself with teasing me, and flinging dust in mine eyes, I shall soon be tired of him.

5. In the meantime, Alciphron and Lysicles, having despatched what they went about, returned to us. Lysicles sat down where he had been before. But Alciphron stood over against us, with his arms folded across, and his head reclined on the left shoulder, in the posture of a man meditating. We sat silent, not to disturb his thoughts; and after two or three minutes he uttered these words—Oh truth! oh liberty! After which he remained musing as before.

Upon this Euphranor took the freedom to interrupt him. Alciphron, said he, it is not fair to spend your time in soliloquies. The conversation of learned and knowing men is rarely to be met with in this corner, and the opportunity you have put into my hands I value too much not to make the best use of it.

*Alc.* Are you then in earnest a votary of truth, and is it possible you should bear the liberty of a fair inquiry?

*Euph.* It is what I desire of all things.

*Alc.* What! upon every subject? upon the notions you

Digitized by Google

first sucked in with your milk, and which have been ever since nursed by parents, pastors, tutors, religious assemblies, books of devotion, and such methods of prepossessing men's minds?

*Euph.* I love information upon all subjects that come in my way, and especially upon those that are most important.

*Alc.* If then you are in earnest, hold fair and stand firm, while I probe your prejudices and extirpate your principles.

Dum veteres avias tibi de pulmone revello.

Having said thus, Alciphron knit his brows and made a short pause, after which he proceeded in the following manner:

If we are at the pains to dive and penetrate into the bottom of things, and analyse opinions into their first principles, we shall find that those opinions which are thought of greatest consequence have the slightest original, being derived either from the casual customs of the country where we live, or from early instruction instilled into our tender minds, before we are able to discern between right and wrong, true and false. The vulgar (by whom I understand all those who do not make a free use of their reason) are apt to take these prejudices for things sacred and unquestionable, believing them to be imprinted on the hearts of men by God Himself, or conveyed by revelation from heaven, or to carry with them so great light and evidence as must force an assent without any inquiry or examination. Thus the shallow vulgar have their heads furnished with sundry conceits, principles, and doctrines, religious, moral, and political, all which they maintain with a zeal proportionable to their want of reason. On the other hand, those who duly employ their faculties in the search of truth, take especial care to weed out of their minds, and extirpate all such notions or prejudices as were planted in them before they arrived at the free and entire use of reason. This difficult task hath been successfully performed by our modern free-thinkers, who have not only dissected with great sagacity the received systems, and traced every established prejudice to the fountain-head, the true and genuine motives of assent: but also, being able to embrace in one comprehensive view the several parts and ages of the world, they have observed a wonderful variety of customs

Digitized by Google

and rites, of institutions religious and civil, of notions and opinions very unlike, and even contrary one to another—a certain sign they cannot all be true. And yet they are all maintained by their several partisans with the same positive air and warm zeal; and, if examined, will be found to bottom on one and the same foundation, the strength of prejudice. By the help of these remarks and discoveries, they have broke through the bands of popular custom, and, having freed themselves from imposture, do now generously lend a hand to their fellow-subjects, to lead them into the same paths of light and liberty. Thus, gentlemen, I have given you a summary account of the views and endeavours of those men who are called free-thinkers. If, in the course of what I have said, or shall say hereafter, there be some things contrary to your preconceived opinions, and therefore shocking and disagreeable, you will pardon the freedom and plainness of a philosopher, and consider that, whatever displeasure I give you of that kind, I do it in strict regard to truth, and obedience to your own commands. I am very sensible that eyes long kept in the dark cannot bear a sudden view of noonday light, but must be brought to it by degrees. It is for this reason the ingenious gentlemen of our profession are accustomed to proceed gradually, beginning with those prejudices to which men have the least attachment, and thence proceeding to undermine the rest by slow and insensible degrees, till they have demolished the whole fabric of human folly and superstition. But the little time I can propose to spend here obligeth me to take a shorter course, and be more direct and plain than possibly may be thought to suit with prudence and good manners.

Upon this, we assured him, he was at full liberty to speak his mind of things, persons, and opinions, without the least reserve.

It is a liberty, replied Alciphron, that we free-thinkers are equally willing to give and take. We love to call things by their right names, and cannot endure that truth should suffer through complaisance. Let us, therefore, lay it down for a preliminary, that no offence be taken at anything whatsoever shall be said on either side. To which we all agreed.

6. In order then, said Alciphron, to find out the truth, we

Digitized by Google

will suppose that I am bred up, for instance, in the Church of England. When I come to maturity of judgment, and reflect on the particular worship and opinions of this Church, I do not remember when or by what means they first took possession of my mind, but there I find them from time immemorial. Then, casting an eye on the education of children, from whence I can make a judgment of my own, I observe they are instructed in religious matters before they can reason about them; and, consequently, that all such instruction is nothing else but filling the tender mind of a child with prejudices. I do, therefore, reject all those religious notions, which I consider as the other follies of my childhood. I am confirmed in this way of thinking when I look abroad into the world, where I observe Papists, and several sects of Dissenters, which do all agree in a general profession of belief in Christ, but differ vastly one from another in the particulars of faith and worship. I then enlarge my view so as to take in Jews and Mahometans, between whom and the Christians I perceive, indeed, some small agreement in the belief of one God; but then they have each their distinct laws and revelations, for which they express the same regard. But, extending my view still further to heathenish and idolatrous nations, I discover an endless variety, not only in particular opinions and modes of worship, but even in the very notion of a Deity, wherein they widely differ one from another, and from all the forementioned sects. Upon the whole, instead of truth simple and uniform, I perceive nothing but discord, opposition, and wild pretensions, all springing from the same source, to wit, the prejudice of education. From such reasonings and reflexions as these, thinking men have concluded that all religions are alike false and fabulous. One is a Christian, another a Jew, a third a Mahometan, a fourth an idolatrous Gentile, but all from one and the same reason—because they happen to be bred up each in his respective sect. In the same manner, therefore, as each of these contending parties condemns the rest, so an unprejudiced stander-by will condemn and reject them altogether, observing, that they all draw their origin from the same fallacious principle, and are carried on by the same artifice, to answer the same ends of the priest and the magistrate.

Digitized by Google

7. *Euph.* You hold then that the magistrate concurs with the priest in imposing on the people?

*Alc.* I do; and so must every one who considers things in a true light. For, you must know the magistrate's principal aim is to keep the people under him in awe. Now, the public eye restrains men from open offences against the laws and government. But, to prevent secret transgressions, a magistrate finds it expedient that men should believe there is an eye of Providence watching over their private actions and designs. And, to intimidate those who might otherwise be drawn into crimes by the prospect of pleasure and profit, he gives them to understand that whoever escapes punishment in this life will be sure to find it in the next; and that so heavy and lasting as infinitely to overbalance the pleasure and profit accruing from his crimes. Hence, the belief of a God, the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments have been esteemed useful engines of government. And, to the end that these notional airy doctrines might make a sensible impression, and be retained on the minds of men, skilful rulers have, in several of the civilized nations of the earth, devised temples, sacrifices, churches, rites, ceremonies, habits, music, prayer, preaching, and the like spiritual trumpery, whereby the priest maketh temporal gains, and the magistrate findeth his account in frightening and subduing the people. This is the original of the combination between Church and State, of religion by law established, of rights, immunities, and incomes of priests all over the world: there being no government but would have you fear God, that you may honour the king or civil power. And you will ever observe that politic princes keep up a good understanding with their clergy, to the end that they in return, by inculcating religion and loyalty into the minds of the people, may render them tame, timorous, and slavish.

Crito and I heard this discourse of Alciphron with the utmost attention, though without any appearance of surprise, there being, indeed, nothing in it to us new or unexpected. But Euphranor, who had never before been present at such conversation, could not help shewing some astonishment; which Lysicles observing, asked him with a lively air, how he liked Alciphron's lecture. It is, said he,

Digitized by Google

the first I believe that you ever heard of the kind, and requireth a strong stomach to digest it.

*Euph.* I will own to you that my digestion is none of the quickest; but it hath sometimes, by degrees, been able to master things which at first appeared indigestible. At present I admire the free spirit and eloquence of Alciphron; but, to speak the truth, I am rather astonished than convinced of the truth of his opinions. How! (said he, turning to Alciphron) is it then possible you should not believe the being of a God?

*Alc.* To be plain with you, I do not.

8. But this is what I foresaw—a flood of light let in at once upon the mind being apt to dazzle and disorder, rather than enlighten it. Was I not pinched in time, the regular way would be to have begun with the circumstantials of religion; next to have attacked the mysteries of Christianity; after that proceeded to the practical doctrines; and in the last place to have extirpated that which of all other religious prejudices, being the first taught and basis of the rest, hath taken the deepest root in our minds, I mean, the belief of a God. I do not wonder it sticks with you, having known several very ingenious men who found it difficult to free themselves from this prejudice.

*Euph.* All men have not the same alacrity and vigour in thinking; for my own part, I find it a hard matter to keep pace with you.

*Alc.* To help you, I will go a little way back, and resume the thread of my reasoning. First, I must acquaint you that, having applied my mind to contemplate the idea of Truth, I discovered it to be of a stable, permanent, and uniform nature; not various and changeable, like modes or fashions, and things depending on fancy. In the next place, having observed several sects and subdivisions of sects espousing very different and contrary opinions, and yet all professing Christianity, I rejected those points wherein they differed, retaining only that which was agreed to by all, and so became a *Latitudinarian.* Having afterwards, upon a more enlarged view of things, perceived that Christians, Jews, and Mahometans had each their different systems of faith, agreeing only in the belief of one God, I became a

Digitized by Google

*Deist.* Lastly, extending my view to all the other various nations which inhabit this globe, and finding they agreed in no one point of faith, but differed one from another, as well as from the forementioned sects, even in the notion of a God, in which there is as great diversity as in the methods of worship, I thereupon became an *Atheist:* it being my opinion that a man of courage and sense should follow his argument wherever it leads him, and that nothing is more ridiculous than to be a free-thinker by halves. I approve the man who makes thorough work, and, not content with lopping off the branches, extirpates the very root from which they sprung.

9. Atheism therefore, that bugbear of women and fools, is the very top and perfection of free-thinking. It is the grand *arcanum* to which a true genius naturally riseth, by a certain climax or gradation of thought, and without which he can never possess his soul in absolute liberty and repose. For your thorough conviction in this main article, do but examine the notion of a God with the same freedom that you would other prejudices. Trace it to the fountain-head, and you shall not find that you had it by any of your senses, the only true means of discovering what is real and substantial in nature: you will find it lying amongst other old lumber in some obscure corner of the imagination, the proper receptacle of visions, fancies, and prejudices of all kinds; and if you are more attached to this than the rest, it is only because it is the oldest. This is all, take my word for it, and not mine only but that of many more the most ingenious men of the age, who, I can assure you, think as I do on the subject of a Deity. Though some of them hold it proper to proceed with more reserve in declaring to the world their opinion in this particular than in most others. And, it must be owned, there are still too many in England who retain a foolish prejudice against the name of atheist. But it lessens every day among the better sort; and when it is quite worn out our free-thinkers may then (and not till then) be said to have given the finishing stroke to religion; it being evident that, so long as the existence of God is believed, religion must subsist in some shape or other. But, the root being once plucked up, the scions which shoot

Digitized by Google

from it will of course wither and decay. Such are all those whimsical notions of conscience, duty, principle, and the like, which fill a man's head with scruples, awe him with fears, and make him a more thorough slave than the horse he rides. A man had better a thousand times be hunted by bailiffs or messengers than haunted by these spectres, which embarrass and embitter all his pleasures, creating the most real and sore servitude upon earth. But the free-thinker, with a vigorous flight of thought, breaks through those airy springes, and asserts his original independency. Others indeed may talk, and write, and fight about liberty, and make an outward pretence to it; but the free-thinker alone is truly free.

Alciphron having ended this discourse with an air of triumph, Euphranor spoke to him in the following manner:

You make clear work. The gentlemen of your profession are, it seems, admirable weeders. You have rooted up a world of notions: I should be glad to see what fine things you have planted in their stead.

*Alc.* Have patience, good Euphranor. I will shew you, in the first place, that whatever was sound and good we leave untouched, and encourage it to grow in the mind of man. And, secondly, I will shew you what excellent things we have planted in it. You must know then that, pursuing our close and severe scrutiny, we do at last arrive at something solid and real, in which all mankind agree, to wit, the appetites, passions, and senses: these are founded in nature, are real, have real objects, and are attended with real and substantial pleasures; food, drink, sleep, and the like animal enjoyments being what all men like and love. And, if we extend our view to other kinds of animals, we shall find them all agree in this, that they have certain natural appetites and senses, in the gratifying and satisfying of which they are constantly employed. Now, these real natural good things, which include nothing of notion or fancy, we are so far from destroying, that we do all we can to cherish and improve them. According to us, every wise man looks upon himself, or his own bodily existence in this present world, as the centre and ultimate end of all his actions and regards. He considers his appetites as natural guides, directing to his proper good, his passions and senses as the

Digitized by Google

natural true means of enjoying this good. Hence, he endeavours to keep his appetites in high relish, his passions and senses strong and lively, and to provide the greatest quantity and variety of real objects suited to them, which he studieth to enjoy by all possible means, and in the highest perfection imaginable. And the man who can do this without restraint, remorse, or fear is as happy as any other animal whatsoever, or as his nature is capable of being. Thus I have given you a succinct view of the principles, discoveries, and tenets of the select spirits of this enlightened age.

10. Crito remarked, that Alciphron had spoken his mind with great clearness.

Yes, replied Euphranor, we are obliged to the gentleman for letting us at once into the tenets of his sect. But, if I may be allowed to speak my mind, Alciphron, though in compliance with my own request, hath given me no small uneasiness.

You need, said Alciphron, make no apology for speaking freely what you think to one who professes himself a free-thinker. I should be sorry to make one, whom I meant to oblige, uneasy. Pray let me know wherein I have offended.

I am half ashamed, replied Euphranor, to own that I, who am no great genius, have a weakness incidental to little ones. I would say that I have favourite opinions, which you represent to be errors and prejudices. For instance, the Immortality of the Soul is a notion I am fond of, as what supports the mind with a very pleasing prospect. And, if it be an error, I should perhaps be of Tully's mind, who in that case professed he should be sorry to know the truth, acknowledging no sort of obligation to certain philosophers in his days, who taught the soul of man was mortal. They were, it seems, predecessors to those who are now called free-thinkers; which name being too general and indefinite, inasmuch as it comprehends all those who think for themselves, whether they agree in opinion with these gentlemen or no—it should not seem amiss to assign them a specific appellation or peculiar name, whereby to distinguish them from other philosophers, at least in our present conference. For, I cannot bear to argue against free-thinking and free-thinkers.

Digitized by Google

*Alc.* In the eyes of a wise man words are of small moment. We do not think truth attached to a name.

*Euph.* If you please then, to avoid confusion, let us call your sect by the same name that Tully (who understood the force of language) bestowed upon them.

*Alc.* With all my heart. Pray what may that name be?

*Euph.* Why, he calls them *minute philosophers.*

Right, said Crito, the modern free-thinkers are the very same with those Cicero called minute philosophers, which name admirably suits them, they being a sort of sect which diminish all the most valuable things, the thoughts, views, and hopes of men; all the knowledge, notions, and theories of the mind they reduce to sense; human nature they contract and degrade to the narrow low standard of animal life, and assign us only a small pittance of time instead of immortality.

Alciphron very gravely remarked that the gentlemen of his sect had done no injury to man, and that, if he be a little, short-lived, contemptible animal, it was not their saying it made him so: and they were no more to blame for whatever defects they discover than a faithful glass for making the wrinkles which it only shows. As to what you observe, said he, of those we now call free-thinkers having been anciently termed *minute philosophers*, it is my opinion this appellation might be derived from their considering things minutely, and not swallowing them in the gross, as other men are used to do. Besides, we all know the best eyes are necessary to discern the minutest objects: it seems, therefore, that minute philosophers might have been so called from their distinguished perspicacity.

*Euph.* O Alciphron! these minute philosophers (since that is their true name) are a sort of pirates who plunder all that come in their way. I consider myself as a man left stripped and desolate on a bleak beach.

11. But who are these profound and learned men that of late years have demolished the whole fabric which lawgivers, philosophers, and divines, have been erecting for so many ages?

Lysicles, hearing these words, smiled, and said he believed Euphranor had figured to himself philosophers in square

Digitized by Google

caps and long gowns: but, thanks to these happy times, the reign of pedantry was over. Our philosophers, said he, are of a different kind from those awkward students who think to come at knowledge by poring on dead languages and old authors, or by sequestering themselves from the cares of the world to meditate in solitude and retirement. They are the best bred men of the age, men who know the world, men of pleasure, men of fashion, and fine gentlemen.

*Euph.* I have some small notion of the people you mention, but should never have taken them for philosophers.

*Cri.* Nor would any one else till of late. The world it seems was long under a mistake about the way to knowledge, thinking it lay through a tedious course of academical education and study. But, among the discoveries of the present age, one of the principal is the finding out that such a method doth rather retard and obstruct than promote knowledge.

*Alc.* Academical study may be comprised in two points, reading and meditation. Their reading is chiefly employed on ancient authors in dead languages: so that a great part of their time is spent in learning words; which, when they have mastered with infinite pains, what do they get by it but old and obsolete notions, that are now quite exploded and out of use? Then, as to their meditations, what can they possibly be good for? He that wants the proper materials of thought may think and meditate for ever to no purpose: those cobwebs spun by scholars out of their own brains being alike unserviceable, either for use or ornament. Proper ideas or materials are only to be got by frequenting good company. I know several gentlemen who, since their appearance in the world, have spent as much time in rubbing off the rust and pedantry of a college education as they have done before in acquiring it.

*Lysicles.* I'll undertake, a lad of fourteen, bred in the modern way, shall make a better figure, and be more considered in any drawing-room or assembly of polite people, than one at four-and-twenty, who hath lain by a long time at school and college. He shall say better things in a better manner, and be more liked by good judges.

*Euph.* Where doth he pick up all this improvement?

*Cri.* Where our grave ancestors would never have looked



Digitized by Google

for it—in a drawing-room, a coffee-house, a chocolate-house, at the tavern, or groom-porter's. In these and the like fashionable places of resort, it is the custom for polite persons to speak freely on all subjects, religious, moral, or political. So that a young gentleman who frequents them is in the way of hearing many instructive lectures, seasoned with wit and raillery, and uttered with spirit. Three or four sentences from a man of quality, spoke with a good air, make more impression and convey more knowledge than a dozen dissertations in a dry academical way.

*Euph.* There is then no method, or course of studies, in those places?

*Lys.* None but an easy free conversation, which takes in everything that offers, without any rule or design.

*Euph.* I always thought that some order was necessary to attain any useful degree of knowledge; that haste and confusion begat a conceited ignorance; that to make our advances sure, they should be gradual, and those points first learned which might cast a light on what was to follow.

*Alc.* So long as learning was to be obtained only by that slow formal course of study, few of the better sort knew much of it: but, now it has grown an amusement, our young gentry and nobility imbibe it insensibly amidst their diversions, and make a considerable progress.

*Euph.* Hence probably the great number of minute philosophers.

*Cri.* It is to this that sect is owing for so many ingenious proficients of both sexes. You may now commonly see (what no former age ever saw) a young lady, or a *petit maître*, nonplus a divine, or an old-fashioned gentleman, who hath read many a Greek and Latin author, and spent much time in hard methodical study.

*Euph.* It should seem then that method, exactness, and industry are a disadvantage.

Here Alciphron, turning to Lysicles, said he could make the point very clear, if Euphranor had any notion of painting.

*Euph.* I never saw a first-rate picture in my life, but have a tolerable collection of prints, and have seen some good drawings.

*Alc.* You know then the difference between the Dutch and Italian manner?

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* I have some notion of it.

*Alc.* Suppose now a drawing finished by the nice and laborious touches of a Dutch pencil, and another off-hand scratched out in the free manner of a great Italian master. The Dutch piece, which hath cost so much pains and time, will be exact indeed, but without that force, spirit, and grace which appear in the other, and are the effects of an easy, free pencil. Do but apply this, and the point will be clear.

*Euph.* Pray inform me, did those great Italian masters begin and proceed in their art without any choice of method or subject, and always draw with the same ease and freedom? Or did they observe some method, beginning with simple and elementary parts, an eye, a nose, a finger, which they drew with great pains and care, often drawing the same thing, in order to draw it correctly, and so proceeding with patience and industry, till, after a considerable length of time, they arrive at the free masterly manner you speak of. If this were the case, I leave you to make the application.

*Alc.* You may dispute the matter if you please. But a man of parts is one thing, and a pedant another. Pains and method may do for some sort of people. A man must be a long time kindling wet straw into a vile smothering flame, but spirits blaze out at once.

*Euph.* The minute philosophers have, it seems, better parts than other men, which qualifies them for a different education.

*Alc.* Tell me, Euphranor, what is it that gives one man a better mien than another; more politeness in dress, speech, and motion? Nothing but frequenting good company. By the same means men get insensibly a delicate taste, a refined judgment, a certain politeness in thinking and expressing one's self. No wonder if you countrymen are strangers to the advantage of polite conversation, which constantly keeps the mind awake and active, exercising its faculties, and calling forth all its strength and spirit, on a thousand different occasions and subjects that never came in the way of a book-worm in a college, any more than of a ploughman.

*Cri.* Hence those lively faculties, that quickness of apprehension, that slyness of ridicule, that egregious talent of wit

Digitized by Google

and humour which distinguish the gentlemen of your profession.

*Euph.* It should seem then that your sect is made up of what you call fine gentlemen.

*Lys.* Not altogether, for we have among us some contemplative spirits of a coarser education, who, from observing the behaviour and proceedings of apprentices, watermen, porters, and the assemblies of rabble in the streets, have arrived at a profound knowledge of human nature, and made great discoveries about the principles, springs, and motives of moral actions. These have demolished the received systems, and done a world of good in the city.

*Alc.* I tell you we have men of all sorts and professions, plodding citizens, thriving stock-jobbers, skilful men in business, polite courtiers, gallant men of the army; but our chief strength, and flower of the flock, are those promising young men who have the advantage of a modern education. These are the growing hopes of our sect, by whose credit and influence in a few years we expect to see those great things accomplished that we have in view.

*Euph.* I could never have imagined your sect so considerable.

*Alc.* There are in England many honest folk as much in the dark about these matters as yourselves.

12. To judge of the prevailing opinion among people of fashion, by what a senator saith in the house, a judge upon the bench, or a priest in the pulpit, who all speak according to law, that is, to the reverend prejudices of our forefathers, would be wrong. You should go into good company, and mind what men of parts and breeding say, those who are best heard and most admired, as well in public places of resort as in private visits. He only who hath these opportunities can know our real strength, our numbers, and the figure that we make.

*Euph.* By your account there must be many minute philosophers among the men of rank and fortune.

*Alc.* Take my word for it, not a few; and they do much contribute to the spreading our notions. For, he who knows the world must observe that fashions constantly descend. It is therefore the right way to propagate an opinion from the

Digitized by Google

upper end. Not to say that the patronage of such men is an encouragement to our authors.

*Euph.* It seems, then, you have authors among you.

*Lys.* That we have, several, and those very great men, who have obliged the world with many useful and profound discoveries.

*Cri.* Moschon, for instance, hath proved that man and beast are really of the same nature: that consequently a man need only indulge his senses and appetites to be as happy as a brute. Gorgias hath gone further, demonstrating man to be a piece of clock-work or machine; and that thought or reason is the same thing as the impulse of one ball against another. Cimon hath made noble use of these discoveries, proving, as clearly as any proposition in mathematics, that conscience is a whim, and morality a prejudice; and that a man is no more accountable for his actions than a clock is for striking. Tryphon hath written irrefragably on the usefulness of vice. Thrasenor hath confuted the foolish prejudice men had against atheism, shewing that a republic of atheists might live very happily together. Demylus hath made a jest of loyalty, and convinced the world there is nothing in it: to him and another philosopher of the same stamp this age is indebted for discovering that public spirit is an idle enthusiasm, which seizeth only on weak minds. It would be endless to recount the discoveries made by writers of this sect.

*Lys.* But the masterpiece and finishing stroke is a learned anecdote of our great Diagoras, containing a demonstration against the being of God: which it is conceived the public is not yet ripe for. But I am assured by some judicious friends who have seen it that it is as clear as daylight, and will do a world of good, at one blow demolishing the whole system of religion. These discoveries are published by our philosophers, sometimes in just volumes, but often in pamphlets and loose papers for their readier conveyance through the kingdom. And to them must be ascribed that absolute and independent freedom which groweth so fast to the terror of all bigots. Even the dull and ignorant begin to open their eyes, and be influenced by the example and authority of so many ingenious men.

*Euph.* It should seem by this account that your sect

Digitized by Google

extend their discoveries beyond religion; and that loyalty to his prince and reverence for the laws are but mean things in the eye of a minute philosopher.

*Lys.* Very mean; we are too wise to think there is anything sacred either in king or constitution, or indeed in anything else. A man of sense may perhaps seem to pay an occasional regard to his prince; but this is no more at bottom than what he pays to God, when he kneels at the sacrament to qualify himself for an office. "Fear God" and "Honour the king" are a pair of slavish maxims, which had for a long time cramped human nature, and awed not only weak minds but even men of good understanding, till their eyes, as I observed before, were opened by our philosophers.

*Euph.* Methinks I can easily comprehend that when the fear of God is quite extinguished the mind must be very easy with respect to other duties, which become outward pretences and formalities, from the moment that they quit their hold upon the conscience, and conscience always supposeth the being of a God. But I still thought that Englishmen of all denominations (how widely soever they might differ as to some particular points) agreed in the belief of a God, and of so much at least as is called Natural Religion.

*Alc.* I have already told you my own opinion of those matters, and what I know to be the opinion of many more.

*Cri.* Probably, Euphranor, by the title of Deists, which is sometimes given to minute philosophers, you have been misled to imagine they believe and worship a God according to the light of nature; but, by living among them, you may soon be convinced of the contrary. They have neither time, nor place, nor form of Divine worship; they offer neither prayers nor praises to God in public; and in their private practice shew a contempt or dislike even of the duties of Natural Religion. For instance, the saying grace before and after meals is a plain point of natural worship, and was once universally practised; but in proportion as this sect prevailed it hath been laid aside, not only by the minute philosophers themselves, who would be infinitely ashamed of such a weakness as to beg God's blessing or give God thanks for their daily food, but also by others who are afraid of being thought fools by the minute philosophers.

*Euph.* Is it possible that men who really believe a God

Digitized by Google

should yet decline paying so easy and reasonable a duty for fear of incurring the contempt of Atheists?

*Cri.* I tell you there are many who, believing in their hearts the truth of religion, are yet afraid or ashamed to own it, lest they should forfeit their reputation with those who have the good luck to pass for great wits and men of genius.

*Alc.* O Euphranor, we must make allowance for Crito's prejudice: he is a worthy gentleman, and means well. But doth it not look like prejudice to ascribe the respect that is paid our ingenious free-thinkers rather to good luck than to merit?

*Euph.* I acknowledge their merit to be very wonderful, and that those authors must needs be great men who are able to prove such paradoxes: for example, that so knowing a man as a minute philosopher should be a mere machine, or at best no better than a brute.

*Alc.* It is a true maxim—That a man should think with the learned, and speak with the vulgar. I should be loath to place a gentleman of merit in such a light, before prejudiced or ignorant men. The tenets of our philosophy have this in common with many other truths in metaphysics, geometry, astronomy, and natural philosophy, that vulgar ears cannot bear them. All our discoveries and notions are in themselves true and certain; but they are at present known only to the better sort, and would sound strange and odd among the vulgar. But this, it is to be hoped, will wear off with time.

*Euph.* I do not wonder that vulgar minds should be startled at the notions of your philosophy.

*Cri.* Truly a very curious sort of philosophy, and much to be admired!

13. The profound thinkers of this way have taken a direct contrary course to all the great philosophers of former ages, who made it their endeavour to raise and refine human-kind, and remove it as far as possible from the brute; to moderate and subdue men's appetites; to remind them of the dignity of their nature; to awaken and improve their superior faculties, and direct them to the noblest objects; to possess men's minds with a high sense of the Divinity, of the Supreme Good,

Digitized by Google

and the Immortality of the Soul. They took great pains to strengthen the obligations to virtue; and upon all those subjects have wrought out noble theories, and treated with singular force of reason. But it seems our minute philosophers act the reverse of all other wise and thinking men; it being their end and aim to erase the principles of all that is great and good from the mind of man, to unhinge all order of civil life, to undermine the foundations of morality, and, instead of improving and ennobling our natures, to bring us down to the maxims and way of thinking of the most uneducated and barbarous nations, and even to degrade human-kind to a level with brute beasts. And all the while they would pass upon the world for men of deep knowledge. But, in effect, what is all this negative knowledge better than downright savage ignorance? That there is no Providence, no Spirit, no Future State, no Moral Duty: truly a fine system for an honest man to own, or an ingenious man to value himself upon!

Alciphron, who heard this discourse with some uneasiness, very gravely replied:—Disputes are not to be decided by the weight of authority, but by the force of reason. You may pass, indeed, general reflexions on our notions, and call them brutal and barbarous if you please: but it is such brutality and such barbarism as few could have attained to if men of the greatest genius had not broken the ice, there being nothing more difficult than to get the better of education, and conquer old prejudices. To remove and cast off a heap of rubbish that has been gathering upon the soul from our very infancy requires great courage and great strength of faculties. Our philosophers, therefore, do well deserve the name of *esprits forts*, *men of strong heads*, *free-thinkers*, and such like appellations, betokening great force and liberty of mind. It is very possible the heroic labours of these men may be represented (for what is not capable of misrepresentation?) as a piratical plundering, and stripping the mind of its wealth and ornaments, when it is in truth divesting it only of its prejudices, and reducing it to its untainted original state of nature. Oh nature! the genuine beauty of pure nature!

*Euph.* You seem very much taken with the beauty of nature. Be pleased to tell me, Alciphron, what those things

Digitized by Google

are which you esteem *natural*, or by what mark I may know them.

14. *Alc.* For a thing to be natural, for instance, to the mind of man, it must appear originally therein; it must be universally in all men; it must be invariably the same in all nations and ages. These limitations of original, universal, and invariable, exclude all those notions found in the human mind which are the effect of custom and education. The case is the same with respect to all other species of beings. A cat, for example, hath a natural inclination to pursue a mouse, because it agrees with the forementioned marks. But, if a cat be taught to play tricks, you will not say those tricks are natural. For the same reason, if upon a plum tree, peaches and apricots are engrafted, nobody will say they are the natural growth of the plum tree.

*Euph.* But to return to *man:* it seems you allow those things alone to be natural to him which show themselves upon his first entrance into the world; to wit, the senses, and such passions and appetites as are discovered upon the first application of their respective objects.

*Alc.* That is my opinion.

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, if from a young apple tree, after a certain period of time, there should shoot forth leaves, blossoms, and apples; would you deny these things to be natural, because they did not discover and display themselves in the tender bud?

*Alc.* I would not.

*Euph.* And suppose that in a man, after a certain season, the appetite of lust, or the faculty of reason shall shoot forth, open, and display themselves, as leaves and blossoms do in a tree; would you, therefore, deny them to be natural to him, because they did not appear in his original infancy?

*Alc.* I acknowledge I would not.

*Euph.* It seems, therefore, that the first mark of a thing's being natural to the mind was not warily laid down by you; to wit, that it should appear originally in it.

*Alc.* It seems so.

*Euph.* Again, inform me, Alciphron, whether you do not think it natural for an orange-plant tree to produce oranges?

Digitized by Google

*Alc.* I do.

*Euph.* But plant it in the north end of Great Britain, and it shall with care produce, perhaps, a good salad; in the southern parts of the same island, it may, with much pains and culture, thrive and produce indifferent fruit; but in Portugal or Naples it will produce much better with little or no pains. Is this true or not?

*Alc.* It is true.

*Euph.* The plant being the same in all places doth not produce the same fruit—sun, soil, and cultivation making a difference.

*Alc.* I grant it.

*Euph.* And, since the case is, you say, the same with respect to all species, why may we not conclude, by a parity of a reason, that things may be natural to human-kind, and yet neither found in all men, nor invariably the same where they are found?

*Alc.* Hold, Euphranor, you must explain yourself further. I shall not be over hasty in my concessions.

*Lys.* You are in the right, Alciphron, to stand upon your guard. I do not like these ensnaring questions.

*Euph.* I desire you to make no concessions in complaisance to me, but only to tell me your opinion upon each particular, that we may understand one another, know wherein we agree, and proceed jointly in finding out the truth. But (added Euphranor, turning to Crito and me) if the gentlemen are against a free and fair inquiry, I shall give them no further trouble.

*Alc.* Our opinions will stand the test. We fear no trial; proceed as you please.

*Euph.* It seems then that, from what you have granted, it should follow things may be natural to men, although they do not actually show themselves in all men, nor in equal perfection; there being as great difference of culture, and every other advantage, with respect to human nature, as is to be found with respect to the vegetable nature of plants, to use your own similitude; is it so or not?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* Answer me, Alciphron, do not men in all times and places, when they arrive at a certain age, express their thoughts by speech?

Digitized by Google

*Alc.* They do.

*Euph.* Should it not seem, then, that language is natural?

*Alc.* It should.

*Euph.* And yet there is a great variety of languages?

*Alc.* I acknowledge there is.

*Euph.* From all this will it not follow a thing may be natural and yet admit of variety?

*Alc.* I grant it will.

*Euph.* Should it not seem, therefore, to follow that a thing may be natural to mankind, though it have not those marks or conditions assigned; though it be not original, universal, and invariable?

*Alc.* It should.

*Euph.* And that, consequently, religious worship and civil government may be natural to man, notwithstanding they admit of sundry forms and different degrees of perfection?

*Alc.* It seems so.

*Euph.* You have granted already that reason is natural to mankind.

*Alc.* I have.

*Euph.* Whatever, therefore, is agreeable to reason is agreeable to the nature of man.

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* Will it not follow from hence that truth and virtue are natural to man?

*Alc.* Whatever is reasonable I admit to be natural.

*Euph.* And, as those fruits which grow from the most generous and mature stock, in the choicest soil, and with the best culture, are most esteemed; even so ought we not to think those sublime truths, which are the fruits of mature thought, and have been rationally deduced by men of the best and most improved understandings, to be the choicest productions of the rational nature of man? And, if so, being in fact reasonable, natural, and true, they ought not to be esteemed unnatural whims, errors of education, and groundless prejudices, because they are raised and forwarded by manuring and cultivating our tender minds, because they take early root, and sprout forth betimes by the care and diligence of our instructors?

*Alc.* Agreed, provided still they may be rationally deduced:

Digitized by Google

but to take this for granted of what men vulgarly call the Truths of Morality and Religion, would be begging the question.

*Euph.* You are in the right: I do not, therefore, take for granted that they are rationally deduced. I only suppose that, if they are, they must be allowed natural to man; or, in other words, agreeable to, and growing from, the most excellent and peculiar part of human nature.

*Alc.* I have nothing to object to this.

*Euph.* What shall we think then of your former assertions —that nothing is *natural* to man but what may be found in all men, in all nations and ages of the world; that, to obtain a genuine view of human nature, we must extirpate all the effects of education and instruction, and regard only the senses, appetites, and passions, which are to be found originally in all mankind; that, therefore, the notion of a God can have no foundation in nature, as not being originally in the mind, nor the same in all men? Be pleased to reconcile these things with your late concessions, which the force of truth seems to have extorted from you.

15. *Alc.* Tell me, Euphranor, whether truth be not one and the same, uniform, invariable thing: and, if so, whether the many different and inconsistent notions which men entertain of God and duty be not a plain proof there is no truth in them?

*Euph.* That truth is constant and uniform I freely own, and that consequently opinions repugnant to each other cannot be true: but I think it will not hence follow they are all alike false. If, among various opinions about the same thing, one be grounded on clear and evident reasons, that is to be thought true, and others only so far as they consist with it. Reason is the same, and rightly applied will lead to the same conclusions, in all times and places. Socrates, two thousand years ago, seems to have reasoned himself into the same notion of a God which is entertained by the philosophers of our days, if you will allow that name to any who are not of your sect.[1] And the remark of Confucius, that a man should guard in his youth against lust, in manhood

[1] In the first edition this read "who are not atheists."—ED.

Digitized by Google

against faction, and in old age against covetousness, is as current morality in Europe as in China.

*Alc.* But still it would be a satisfaction if all men thought the same way, difference of opinions implying uncertainty.

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, what you take to be the cause of a lunar eclipse.

*Alc.* The shadow of the earth interposing between the sun and moon.

*Euph.* Are you sure of this?

*Alc.* Undoubtedly.

*Euph.* Are all mankind agreed in this truth?

*Alc.* By no means. Ignorant and barbarous people assign different ridiculous causes for this appearance.

*Euph.* It seems, then, there are different opinions about the nature of an eclipse.

*Alc.* There are.

*Euph.* And nevertheless one of these opinions is true.

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* Diversity, therefore, of opinions about a thing, doth not hinder but that thing may be, and one of the opinions concerning it may be true.

*Alc.* This I acknowledge.

*Euph.* It should seem, therefore, that your argument against the belief of a God from the variety of opinions about his nature is not conclusive. Nor do I see how you can conclude against the truth of any moral or religious tenet, from the various opinions of men upon the same subject. Might not a man as well argue, that no historical account of a matter of fact can be true, when different relations are given of it? Or, may we not as well infer that, because the several sects of philosophy maintain different opinions, none of them can be in the right, not even the *minute philosophers* themselves?

During this conversation Lysicles seemed uneasy, like one that wished in his heart there was no God. Alciphron, said he, methinks you sit by very tamely, while Euphranor saps the foundation of our tenets.

Be of good courage, replied Alciphron: a skilful gamester has been known to ruin his adversary by yielding him some advantage at first. I am glad, said he, turning to Euphranor, that you are drawn in to argue, and make your appeals to

Digitized by Google

reason. For my part, wherever reason leads I shall not be afraid to follow. Know then, Euphranor, that I freely give up what you now contend for. I do not value the success of a few crude notions thrown out in a loose discourse, any more than the Turks do the loss of that vile infantry they place in the front of their armies, for no other end but to waste the powder, and blunt the swords of their enemies. Be assured I have in reserve a body of otherguess arguments, which I am ready to produce. I will undertake to prove——

*Euph.* O Alciphron! I do not doubt your faculty of proving. But, before I put you to the trouble of any farther proofs, I should be glad to know whether the notions of your minute philosophy are worth proving. I mean, whether they are of use and service to mankind.

16. *Alc.* As to that, give me leave to tell you, a thing may be useful to one man's views, and not to another's: but truth is truth, whether useful or not, and must not be measured by the convenience of this or that man, or party of men.

*Euph.* But is not the general good of mankind to be regarded as a rule and measure of moral truths, of all such truths as direct or influence the moral actions of men?

*Alc.* That point is not clear to me. I know, indeed, that legislators, and divines, and politicians have always alleged, that it is necessary to the well-being of mankind that they should be kept in awe by the slavish notions of religion and morality.[1] But, granting all this, how will it prove these notions to be true? Convenience is one thing, and truth is another. A genuine philosopher, therefore, will overlook all advantages, and consider only truth itself as such.

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, is your genuine philosopher a wise man, or a fool?

*Alc.* Without question, the wisest of men.

*Euph.* Which is to be thought the wise man, he who acts with design, or he who acts at random?

*Alc.* He who acts with design.

[1] The moral virtues are the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride. "Fable of the Bees," Part I., p. 37. (Note added to edition of 1752. Berkeley quotes from the second edition of the "Fable," 1723.—ED.)

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* Whoever acts with design, acts for some end: doth he not?

*Alc.* He doth.

*Euph.* And a wise man for a good end?

*Alc.* True.

*Euph.* And he sheweth his wisdom in making choice of fit means to obtain his end?

*Alc.* I acknowledge it.

*Euph.* By how much, therefore, the end proposed is more excellent, and by how much fitter the means employed are to obtain it, so much the wiser is the agent to be esteemed?

*Alc.* This seems to be true.

*Euph.* Can a rational agent propose a more excellent end than happiness?

*Alc.* He cannot.

*Euph.* Of good things, the greater good is most excellent?

*Alc.* Doubtless.

*Euph.* Is not the general happiness of mankind a greater good than the private happiness of one man, or of some certain men?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* Is it not therefore the most excellent end?

*Alc.* It seems so.

*Euph.* Are not then those who pursue this end, by the properest methods, to be thought the wisest men?

*Alc.* I grant they are.

*Euph.* Which is a wise man governed by, wise or foolish notions?

*Alc.* By wise, doubtless.

*Euph.* It seems then to follow, that he who promotes the general well-being of mankind, by the proper necessary means, is truly wise, and acts upon wise grounds.

*Alc.* It should seem so.

*Euph.* And is not folly of an opposite nature to wisdom?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* Might it not therefore be inferred, that those men are foolish who go about to unhinge such principles as have a necessary connexion with the general good of mankind?

*Alc.* Perhaps this might be granted: but at the same time I must observe that it is in my power to deny it.

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* How! you will not surely deny the conclusion, when you admit the premises?

*Alc.* I would fain know upon what terms we argue; whether in this progress of question and answer, if a man makes a slip, it be utterly irretrievable? For, if you are on the catch to lay hold of every advantage, without allowing for surprise or inattention, I must tell you this is not the way to convince my judgment.

*Euph.* O Alciphron! I aim not at triumph, but at truth. You are therefore at full liberty to unravel all that hath been said, and to recover or correct any slip you have made. But then you must distinctly point it out: otherwise it will be impossible ever to arrive at any conclusion.

*Alc.* I agree with you upon these terms jointly to proceed in search of truth, for to that I am sincerely devoted. In the progress of our present inquiry, I was, it seems, guilty of an oversight, in acknowledging the general happiness of mankind to be a greater good than the particular happiness of one man. For in fact the individual happiness of every man alone constitutes his own entire good. The happiness of other men, making no part of mine, is not with respect to me a good: I mean a true natural good. It cannot therefore be a reasonable end to be proposed by me, in truth and nature (for I do not speak of political pretences), since no wise man will pursue an end which doth not concern him. This is the voice of nature. O nature! thou art the fountain, original, and pattern of all that is good and wise.

*Euph.* You would like then to follow nature, and propose her as a guide and pattern for your imitation?

*Alc.* Of all things.

*Euph.* Whence do you gather this respect for nature?

*Alc.* From the excellency of her productions.

*Euph.* In a vegetable, for instance, you say there is use and excellency; because the several parts of it are so connected and fitted to each other as to protect and nourish the whole, make the individual grow, and propagate the kind; and because in its fruits or qualities it is adapted to please the sense, or contribute to the benefit of man.

*Alc.* Even so.

*Euph.* In like manner, do you not infer the excellency of animal bodies from observing the frame and fitness of their

Digitized by Google

several parts, by which they mutually conspire to the well-being of each other as well as of the whole? Do you not also observe a natural union and consent between animals of the same kind; and that even different kinds of animals have certain qualities and instincts whereby they contribute to the exercise, nourishment, and delight of each other? Even the inanimate unorganized elements seem to have an excellence relative to each other. Where was the excellency of water, if it did not cause herbs and vegetables to spring from the earth, and put forth flowers and fruits? And what would become of the beauty of the earth, if it was not warmed by the sun, moistened by water, and fanned by air? Throughout the whole system of the visible and natural world, do you not perceive a mutual connexion and correspondence of parts? And is it not from hence that you frame an idea of the perfection, and order, and beauty of nature?

*Alc.* All this I grant.

*Euph.* And have not the Stoics heretofore said (who were no more bigots than you are), and did you not yourself say, this pattern of order was worthy of the imitation of rational agents?

*Alc.* I do not deny this to be true.

*Euph.* Ought we not, therefore, to infer the same union, order, and regularity in the moral world that we perceive to be in the natural?

*Alc.* We ought.

*Euph.* Should it not therefore seem to follow, that reasonable creatures were, as the philosophical Emperor[1] observes, made one for another; and, consequently, that *man* ought not to consider himself as an independent individual, whose happiness is not connected with that of other men; but rather as a part of a whole, to the common good of which he ought to conspire, and order his ways and actions suitably, if he would live according to nature?

*Alc.* Supposing this to be true, what then?

*Euph.* Will it not follow that a wise man should consider and pursue his private good, with regard to, and in conjunction with that of other men? In granting of which, you

[1] M. Antonin. lib. iv.



Digitized by Google

thought yourself guilty of an oversight. Though, indeed, the sympathy of pain and pleasure, and the mutual affections by which mankind are knit together have been always allowed a plain proof of this point: and though it was the constant doctrine of those who were esteemed the wisest and most thinking men among the ancients, as the Platonists, Peripatetics, and Stoics; to say nothing of Christians, whom you pronounce to be an unthinking, prejudiced sort of people.

*Alc.* I shall not dispute this point with you.

*Euph.* Since, therefore, we are so far agreed, should it not seem to follow from the premises—that the belief of a God, of a future state, and of moral duties are the only wise, right, and genuine principles of human conduct, in case they have a necessary connection with the well-being of mankind? This conclusion you have been led to by your own concessions, and by the analogy of nature.

*Alc.* I have been drawn into it step by step through several preliminaries, which I cannot well call to mind; but one thing I observe, that you build on the necessary connexion those principles have with the well-being of mankind, which is a point neither proved nor granted.

*Lys.* This I take to be a grand fundamental prejudice, as I doubt not, if I had time, I could make appear. But it is now late, and we will, if you think fit, defer this subject till to-morrow.

Upon which motion of Lysicles, we put an end to our conversation for that evening.

Digitized by Google

# THE SECOND DIALOGUE.[1]

1. Vulgar error, that vice is hurtful. 2. The benefit of drunkenness, gaming, and whoring. 3. Prejudice against vice wearing off. 4. Its usefulness illustrated in the instances of Callicles and Telesilla. 5. The reasoning of Lysicles in behalf of vice examined. 6. Wrong to punish actions, when the doctrines whence they flow are tolerated. 7. Hazardous experiment of the minute philosophers. 8. Their doctrine of circulation and revolution. 9. Their sense of a reformation. 10. Riches alone not the public weal. 11. Authority of minute philosophers: their prejudice against religion. 12. Effects of luxury: virtue, whether notional? 13. Pleasure of sense. 14. What sort of pleasure most natural to man. 15. Dignity of human nature. 16. Pleasure mistaken. 17. Amusements, misery, and cowardice of minute philosophers. 18. Rakes cannot reckon. 19. Abilities and success of minute philosophers. 20. Happy effects of the minute philosophy in particular instances. 21. Their free notions about government. 22. England the proper soil for minute philosophy. 23. The policy and address of its professors. 24. Merit of minute philosophers towards the public. 25. Their notions and character. 26. Their tendency towards popery and slavery.

## 1.

NEXT morning Alciphron and Lysicles said the weather was so fine they had a mind to spend the day abroad, and take a cold dinner under a shade in some pleasant part of the country. Whereupon, after breakfast, we went down to a beach about half a mile off; where we walked on the smooth sand, with the ocean on one hand, and on the other

[1] This Dialogue is directed chiefly against the economical paradoxes of Mandeville, whose shrewd and coarse "Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Public Benefits" (1705 as "the Grumbling Hive," 1714, &c., as the "Fable"), had half-terrified and wholly shocked and puzzled the reputable part of the nation. In this work some doggerel verses set forth how a prosperous and vicious hive of bees found that on becoming virtuous, their prosperity suddenly deserted them; and the lesson of every few lines is pointed out in a lengthy commentary. "What we call evil in this world," he says, for instance, on p. 428 (1723 edition),

Digitized by Google

wild broken rocks, intermixed with shady trees and springs of water, till the sun began to be uneasy. We then withdrew into a hollow glade, between two rocks,[1] where we had no sooner seated ourselves than Lysicles, addressing himself to Euphranor, said:—I am now ready to perform what I undertook last evening, which was to show there is nothing in that necessary connexion which some men imagine between those principles you contend for, and the public good. I freely own that, if this question was to be decided by the authority of legislators or philosophers, it must go against us. For, those men generally take it for granted that Vice is pernicious to the public; and that men cannot be kept from vice but by the fear of God, and the sense of a Future State: whence they are induced to think the belief of such things necessary to the well-being of human-kind. This false notion hath prevailed for many ages in the world, and done an infinite deal of mischief, being in truth the cause of religious establishments, and gaining the protection and encouragement of laws and magistrates to the clergy and their superstitions. Even some of the wisest among the ancients, who agreed with our sect in denying a Providence and the Immortality of the Soul, had nevertheless the weakness to lie under the common prejudice, that vice was hurtful to societies of men. But England hath of late produced great philosophers, who have undeceived the world, and proved to a demonstration that private vices are public benefits. This discovery was reserved to our times, and our sect hath the glory of it.

*Cri.* It is possible some men of fine understanding might

"moral as well as natural, is the grand principle that makes us social creatures, the solid basis, the light and support of all trades without exception." Teaching such as this, presented with cynical vigour, and a similitude of truth, was not slow of application in an age which, though vicious, was willing to justify its vices. The radical error of the economical part of the "Fable" is that Mandeville regards large and small expenditures quite distinctly from any relation they bear to accumulated wealth. Berkeley does not touch this deeply here, but an instructive comparison may be made with the financial paragraphs of the Querist, reprinted in vol. iii. of this edition. Mandeville replied, feebly enough, in a "Letter to Dion occasioned by his book called 'Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher' (1732)."—ED.

[1] A picture of the Second Beach and Hanging Rocks, Rhode Island. (Fraser's "Life," p. 168.)—ED.

Digitized by Google

in former ages have had a glimpse of this important truth; but it may be presumed they lived in ignorant times and bigoted countries, which were not ripe for such a discovery.

*Lys.*[1] Men of narrow capacities and short sight, being able to see no further than one link in a chain of consequences, are shocked at small evils which attend upon vice. But those who can enlarge their view, and look through a long series of events, may behold happiness resulting from vice, and good springing out of evil in a thousand instances. To prove my point, I shall not trouble you with authorities, or far-fetched arguments, but bring you to plain matter of fact. Do but take a view of each particular vice, and trace it through its effects and consequences, and then you will clearly perceive the advantage it brings to the public.

2. Drunkenness, for instance, is by your sober moralists thought a pernicious vice; but it is for want of considering the good effects that flow from it. For, in the first place, it increases the malt tax, a principal branch of his majesty's revenue, and thereby promotes the safety, strength, and glory of the nation. Secondly, it employs a great number of hands, the brewer, the maltster, the ploughman, the dealer in hops, the smith, the carpenter, the brazier, the joiner, with all other artificers necessary to supply those enumerated with their respective instruments and utensils. All which advantages are procured from drunkenness in the vulgar way, by strong beer. This point is so clear it will admit of no dispute. But, while you are forced to allow thus much, I foresee you are ready to object against drunkenness occasioned by wine and spirits, as exporting wealth into foreign countries. But do you not reflect on the number of hands which even this sets on work at home: the distillers, the vintners, the merchants, the sailors, the shipwrights, with all those who are employed towards victualling and fitting out ships, which upon a nice computation will be found to include an incredible variety of trades and callings. Then, for freighting

[1] This speech is a close compression of passages from the "Fable." Compare, for instance, its beginning with the following: "The short-sighted vulgar in the chain of causes seldom can see further than one link; but those who can enlarge their view . . . may, in a hundred places, see good spring up and pullulate from evil. . . ." ("Fable," p. 89.)—ED.

Digitized by Google

our ships to answer these foreign importations, all our manufacturers throughout the kingdom are employed, the spinners, the weavers, the dyers, the wool-combers, the carriers, the packers. And the same may be said of many other manufacturers, as well as the woollen. And if it be further considered how many men are enriched by all the forementioned ways of trade and business, and the expenses of these men and their families, in all the several articles of convenient and fashionable living, whereby all sorts of trades and callings, not only at home but throughout all parts wherever our commerce reaches, are kept in employment; you will be amazed at the wonderfully-extended scene of benefits which arises from the single vice of drunkenness, so much run down and declaimed against by all grave reformers.

With as much judgment your half-witted folk are accustomed to censure gaming. And indeed (such is the ignorance and folly of mankind) a gamester and a drunkard are thought no better than public nuisances, when in truth they do each in their way greatly conduce to the public benefit. If you look only on the surface and first appearance of things, you will no doubt think playing at cards a very idle and fruitless occupation. But dive deeper, and you shall perceive this idle amusement employs the card-maker, and he sets the paper-mills at work, by which the poor rag-man is supported; not to mention the builders and workers in wood and iron that are employed in erecting and furnishing those mills. Look still deeper, and you shall find that candles and chair-hire employ the industrious and the poor, who, by these means, come to be relieved by sharpers and gentlemen, who would not give one penny in charity. But, you will say that many gentlemen and ladies are ruined by play, without considering that what one man loses another gets, and that, consequently, as many are made as ruined: money changeth hands, and in this circulation the life of business and commerce consists. When money is spent, it is all one to the public who spends it. Suppose a fool of quality becomes the dupe of a man of mean birth and circumstance who has more wit? In this case what harm doth the public sustain? Poverty is relieved, ingenuity is rewarded, the money stays at home, and has a lively circulation, the ingenious sharper being enabled to set up an equipage and spend handsomely,

Digitized by Google

which cannot be done without employing a world of people. But you will perhaps object that a man reduced by play may be put upon desperate courses, hurtful to the public. Suppose the worst, and that he turns highwayman; such a man hath a short life and a merry. While he lives, he spends, and for one that he robs makes twenty the better for his expense. And, when his time is come, a poor family may be relieved by fifty or a hundred pounds set upon his head. A vulgar eye looks on many a man as an idle or mischievous fellow, whom a true philosopher, viewing in another light, considers as a man of pleasant occupation, who diverts himself, and benefits the public, and that with so much ease that he employs a multitude of men, and sets an infinite machine in motion, without knowing the good he does, or even intending to do any: which is peculiar to that gentleman-like way of doing good by vice.

I was considering play, and that insensibly led me to the advantages which attend robbing on the highway. Oh the beautiful and never-enough-admired connexion of vices! It would take too much time to show how they all hang together, and what an infinite deal of good takes its rise from every one of them. One word for a favourite vice, and I shall leave you to make out the rest yourself, by applying the same way of reasoning to all other vices. A poor girl, who might not have the spending of half-a-crown a week in what you call an honest way, no sooner hath the good fortune to be a kept mistress, but she employs milliners, laundresses, tire-women, mercers, and a number of other trades, to the benefit of her country. It would be endless to trace and pursue every particular vice through its consequences and effects, and shew the vast advantage they all are of to the public. The true springs that actuate the great machine of commerce, and make a flourishing state, have been hitherto little understood. Your moralists and divines have for so many ages been corrupting the genuine sense of mankind, and filling their heads with such absurd principles, that it is in the power of few men to contemplate real life with an unprejudiced eye. And fewer still have sufficient parts and sagacity to pursue a long train of consequences, relations, and dependences, which must be done in order to form a just and entire notion of the public weal. But, as I said before, our

Digitized by Google

sect hath produced men capable of these discoveries, who have displayed them in full light, and made them public for the benefit of their country.

3. Oh! said Euphranor, who heard this discourse with great attention, you, Lysicles, are the very man I wanted, eloquent and ingenious, knowing in the principles of your sect, and willing to impart them. Pray tell me, do these principles find an easy admission in the world?

*Lys.* They do among ingenious men and people of fashion, though you will sometimes meet with strong prejudices against them in the middle sort, an effect of ordinary talents and mean breeding.

*Euph.* I should wonder if men were not shocked at notions of such a surprising nature, so contrary to all laws, education, and religion.

*Lys.* They would be shocked much more if it had not been for the skilful address of our philosophers, who, considering that most men are influenced by names rather than things, have introduced a certain polite way of speaking, which lessens much of the abhorrence and prejudice against vice.

*Euph.* Explain me this.

*Lys.* Thus, in our dialect, a vicious man is a man of pleasure, a sharper is one that plays the whole game, a lady is said to have an affair, a gentleman to be a gallant, a rogue in business to be one that knows the world. By this means we have no such things as sots, debauchees, whores, rogues, or the like, in the *beau monde*, who may enjoy their vices without incurring disagreeable appellations.

*Euph.* Vice then is, it seems, a fine thing with an ugly name.

*Lys.* Be assured it is.

*Euph.* It should seem then that Plato's fearing lest youth might be corrupted by those fables which represented the gods vicious was an effect of his weakness and ignorance.

*Lys.* It was, take my word for it.

*Euph.* And yet Plato had kept good company, and lived in a court! And Cicero, who knew the world well, had a profound esteem for him.

*Cri.* I tell you, Euphranor, that Plato and Tully might perhaps make a figure in Athens or Rome: but, were they to revive in our days, they would pass but for underbred

Digitized by Google

pedants, there being at most coffee-houses in London several able men who could convince them they knew nothing in, what they are valued so much for, morals and politics.

*Lys.* How many long-headed men do I know, both in the court-end and the city, with five times Plato's sense, who care not one straw what notions their sons have of God or virtue.

4. *Cri.* I can illustrate this doctrine of Lysicles by examples that will make you perceive its force. Cleophon, a minute philosopher, took strict care of his son's education, and entered him betimes in the principles of his sect. Callicles (that was his son's name), being a youth of parts, made a notable progress; insomuch that before he became of age he killed his old covetous father with vexation, and ruined the estate he left behind him; or, in other words, made a present of it to the public, spreading the dunghill collected by his ancestors over the face of the nation, and making out of one overgrown estate several pretty fortunes for ingenious men, who live by the vices of the great. Telesilla, though a woman of quality and spirit, made no figure in the world, till she was instructed by her husband in the tenets of minute philosophy, which he wisely thought would prevent her giving anything in charity. From that time, she took a turn towards expensive diversions, particularly deep play, by which means she soon transferred a considerable share of his fortune to several acute men skilled in that mystery, who wanted it more, and circulated it quicker, than her husband would have done, who in return hath got an heir to his estate, having never had a child before. That same Telesilla, who was good for nothing so long as she believed her catechism, now shines in all public places, is a lady of gallantry and fashion, and has, by her extravagant parade in lace and fine clothes, raised a spirit of expense in other ladies, very much to the public benefit, though it must be owned to the mortification of many frugal husbands.

While Crito related these facts with a grave face, I could not forbear smiling, which Lysicles observing—Superficial minds, said he, may perhaps find something to ridicule in these accounts; but all who are masters of a just way of

Digitized by Google

thinking must needs see that those maxims, the benefit whereof is universal, and the damage only particular to private persons or families, ought to be encouraged in a wise commonwealth.

For my part, said Euphranor, I profess myself to be rather dazzled and confounded than convinced by your reasoning; which, as you observed yourself, taking in the connexion of many distant points, requires great extent of thought to comprehend it. I must therefore entreat you to bear with my defects; suffer me to take to pieces what is too big to be received at once. And, where I cannot keep pace with you, permit me to follow you step by step, as fast as I can.

*Lys.* There is reason in what you say. Every one cannot suddenly take a long concatenation of arguments.

5. *Euph.* Your several arguments seem to centre in this: that vice circulates money and promotes industry, which causeth a people to flourish. Is it not so?

*Lys.* It is.

*Euph.* And the reason that vice produceth this effect, is, because it causeth an extravagant consumption; which is the most beneficial to the manufactures, their encouragement consisting in a quick demand and high price.

*Lys.* True.

*Euph.* Hence you think a drunkard most beneficial to the brewer and the vintner, as causing a quick consumption of liquor, inasmuch as he drinks more than other men?

*Lys.* Without doubt.

*Euph.* Say, Lysicles, who drinks most, a sick man or a healthy?

*Lys.* A healthy.

*Euph.* And which is healthier, a sober man or a drunkard?

*Lys.* A sober man.

*Euph.* A sober man, therefore, in health may drink more than a drunkard when he is sick?

*Lys.* He may.

*Euph.* What think you, will a man consume more meat and drink in a long life or a short one?

*Lys.* In a long.

*Euph.* A sober healthy man, therefore, in a long life, may

Digitized by Google

circulate more money by eating and drinking, than a glutton or drunkard in a short one?

*Lys.* What then?

*Euph.* Why then it should seem that he may be more beneficial to the public, even in this way of eating and drinking.

*Lys.* I shall never own that temperance is the way to promote drinking.

*Euph.* But you will own sickness lessens, and death puts an end to all drinking? The same argument will hold, for aught I can see, with respect to all other vices that impair men's health and shorten their lives. And, if we admit this, it will not be so clear a point that vice hath merit towards the public.

*Lys.* But, admitting that some artificers or traders might be as well encouraged by the sober men as the vicious; what shall we say of those who subsist altogether by vice and vanity?

*Euph.* If such there are, may they not be otherwise employed without loss to the public? Tell me, Lysicles, is there anything in the nature of vice, as such, that renders it a public blessing, or is it only the consumption it occasions?

*Lys.* I have already shewn how it benefits the nation by the consumption of its manufactures.

*Euph.* And you have granted that a long and healthy life consumes more than a short and sickly one; and you will not deny that many consume more than one? Upon the whole then, compute and say, which is most likely to promote the industry of his countrymen, a virtuous married man with a healthy numerous offspring, and who feeds and clothes the orphans in his neighbourhood, or a fashionable rake about town? I would fain know whether money spent innocently doth not circulate as well as that spent upon vice? And, if so, whether by your own rule it doth not benefit the public as much?

*Lys.* What I have proved, I proved plainly, and there is no need of more words about it.

*Euph.* You seem to me to have proved nothing, unless you can make it out that it is impossible to spend a fortune innocently. I should think the public weal of a nation

Digitized by Google

consists in the number and good condition of its inhabitants; have you anything to object to in this?

*Lys.* I think not.

*Euph.* To this end which would most conduce, the employing men in open air and manly exercise, or in sedentary business within doors?

*Lys.* The former, I suppose.

*Euph.* Should it not seem, therefore, that building, gardening, and agriculture would employ men more usefully to the public than if tailors, barbers, perfumers, distillers, and such arts were multiplied?

*Lys.* All this I grant; but it makes against you. For, what moves men to build and plant but vanity, and what is vanity but vice?

*Euph.* But, if a man should do those things for his convenience or pleasure, and in proportion to his fortune, without a foolish ostentation, or overrating them beyond their due value, they would not then be the effect of vice; and how do you know but this may be the case?

*Cri.* One thing I know, that the readiest way to quicken that sort of industry, and employ carpenters, masons, smiths, and all such trades, would be to put in practice the happy hint of a celebrated minute philosopher, who, by profound thinking, has discovered that burning the city of London would be no such bad action as silly prejudiced people might possibly imagine; inasmuch as it would produce a quick circulation of property, transferring it from the rich to the poor, and employing a great number of artificers of all kinds.[1] This, at least, cannot be denied, that it hath opened a new way of thinking to our incendiaries, of which the public hath of late begun to reap the benefit.

*Euph.* I cannot sufficiently admire this ingenious thought.

6. But methinks it would be dangerous to make such notions public.

*Cri.* Dangerous to whom?

*Euph.* In the first place to the publisher.

[1] See the "Fable," p. 415, where, however, Mandeville does no more than state that the Great Fire was an occasion of profit to many.—ED.

Digitized by Google

*Cri.* That is a mistake; for such notions have been published and met with due applause, in this most wise and happy age of free-thinking, free-speaking, free-writing, and free-acting.

*Euph.* How may a man then publish and practise such things with impunity?

*Cri.* To speak the truth, I am not so clear as to the practic part. An unlucky accident now and then befals an ingenious man. The minute philosopher Magirus, being desirous to benefit the public, by circulating an estate possessed by a near relation who had not the heart to spend it, soon convinced himself, upon these principles, that it would be a very worthy action to dispatch out of the way such a useless fellow, to whom he was next heir. But, for this laudable attempt, he had the misfortune to be hanged by an underbred judge and jury. Could anything be more unjust?

*Euph.* Why unjust?

*Cri.* Is it not unjust to punish actions, when the principles from which they directly follow are tolerated and applauded by the public? Can anything be more inconsistent than to condemn in practice what is approved in speculation? Truth is one and the same; it being impossible a thing should be practically wrong and speculatively right. Thus much is certain, Magirus was perfect master of all this theory, and argued most acutely about it with a friend of mine, a little before he did the fact for which he died.

*Lys.* The best of it is the world every day grows wiser;[1] though it must be owned, the writers of our sect have not yet shaken off all respect for human laws, whatever they may do as to divine. It seems they venture no further, than to recommend an inward principle of vice, operating under an outward restraint of human laws.

*Cri.* That writer who considers man only as an instrument of passion who absolves him from all ties of conscience and religion, and leaves him no law to respect or to fear, but the law of the land, is to be sure a public benefit. You mistake, Euphranor, if you think the minute philosophers idle theorists; they are men of practical views.

[1] What follows, to "a public benefit" (9 lines), in Crito's speech, was added to the second edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* As much as I love liberty, I should be afraid to live among such people; it would be, as Seneca somewhere expresseth it, *in libertate bellis ac tyrannis sæviore.*

*Lys.* What do you mean by quoting Plato and Seneca? Can you imagine a free-thinker is to be influenced by the authority of such old-fashioned writers?

*Euph.* You, Lysicles, and your friend, have often quoted to me ingenious moderns, profound fine gentlemen, with new names of authors in the minute philosophy, to whose merits I am a perfect stranger. Suffer me in my turn to cite such authorities as I know, and have passed for many ages upon the world.

7. But, authority apart, what do you say to experience? My observation can reach as far as a private family; and some wise men have thought a family may be considered as a small kingdom, or a kingdom as a great family. Do you admit this to be true?

*Lys.* If I say *yes*, you will make an inference; and if I say *no*, you will demand a reason. The best way is to say nothing at all. There is, I see, no end of answering.

*Euph.* If you give up the point you undertook to prove, there is an end at once: but, if you hope to convince me, you must answer my questions, and allow me the liberty to argue and infer.

*Lys.* Well, suppose I admit that a kingdom may be considered as a great family.

*Euph.* I shall ask you then, whether ever you knew private families thrive by those vices you think so beneficial to the public?

*Lys.* Suppose I have not.

*Euph.* Might not a man therefore, by a parity of reason, suspect their being of that benefit to the public?

*Lys.* Fear not; the next age will thrive and flourish.

*Euph.* Pray tell me, Lysicles; suppose you saw a fruit of a new untried kind; would you recommend it to your own family to make a full meal of?

*Lys.* I would not.

*Euph.* Why then would you try upon your own country these maxims which were never admitted in any other?

*Lys.* The experiment must begin somewhere; and we are

Digitized by Google

resolved our own country shall have the honour and advantage of it.

*Euph.* O Lysicles! hath not old England subsisted for many ages without the help of your notions?

*Lys.* She has.

*Euph.* And made some figure?

*Lys.* I grant it.

*Euph.* Why then should you make her run the risk of a new experiment, when it is certain she may do without it?

*Lys.* But we would make her do better. We would produce a change in her that never was seen in any nation.

*Euph.* Sallust observes that a little before the downfall of the Roman greatness avarice (the effect of luxury) had erased the good old principles of probity and justice, had produced a contempt for religion, and made everything venal; while ambition bred dissimulation, and caused men to unite in clubs and parties, not from honourable motives, but narrow and interested views. The same historian observes of that great free-thinker Catiline, that he made it his business to insinuate himself into the acquaintance of young men, whose minds, unimproved by years and experience, were more easily seduced. I know not how it happens, but these passages have occurred to my thoughts more than once during this conversation.

*Lys.* Sallust was a sententious pedant.

*Euph.* But consult any historian, look into any writer. See, for instance, what Xenophon and Livy say of Sparta and Rome, and then tell me if vice be not the likeliest way to ruin and enslave a people.

*Lys.* When a point is clear by its own evidence, I never think it worth while to consult old authors about it.

*Cri.* It requires much thought and delicate observation to go to the bottom of things. But one who hath come at truth with difficulty can impart it with ease. I will, therefore, Euphranor, explain to you in three words (what none of your old writers ever dreamt of)—the true cause of ruin to those states. You must know that vice and virtue, being opposite and contradictory principles, both working at once in a state, will produce contrary effects, which intestine discord must needs tend to the dissolution and ruin of the whole. But it is the design of our minute philosophers, by making men

Digitized by Google

wicked upon principle, a thing unknown to the ancients, so to weaken and destroy the force of virtue that its effects shall not be felt in the public. In which case, vice being uncontrolled, without let or impediment of principle, pure and genuine, without allay of virtue, the nation must doubtless be very flourishing and triumphant.

*Euph.* Truly, a noble scheme!

*Cri.* And in a fair way to take effect. For, our young proficients in the minute philosophy, having, by a rare felicity of education, no tincture of bigotry or prejudice, do far outgo the old standers and professors of the sect; who, though men of admirable parts, yet, having had the misfortune to be imbued in their childhood with some religious notions, could never after get entirely rid of them; but still retain some small grains of conscience and superstition, which are a check upon the noblest genius. In proof of this, I remember that the famous minute philosopher, old Demodicus, came one day from conversation upon business with Timander, a young gentleman of the same sect, full of astonishment. I am surprised, said he, to see so young, and withal so complete a villain; and, such was the force of prejudice, spoke of Timander with abhorrence, not considering that he was only the more egregious and profound philosopher of the two.

8. *Euph.* Though much may be hoped from the unprejudiced education of young gentlemen, yet it seems we are not to expect a settled and entire happiness, before vice reigns pure and unmixed: till then, much is to be feared from the dangerous struggle between vice and virtue, which may perchance overturn and dissolve this government, as it hath done others.

*Lys.* No matter for that, if a better comes in its place. We have cleared the land of all prejudices towards government or constitution, and made them fly like other phantasms before the light of reason and good sense. Men who think deeply cannot see any reason why power should not change hands as well as property; or why the fashion of a government should not be changed as easily as that of a garment. The perpetual circulating and revolving of wealth and power, no matter through what or whose hands, is that which keeps

Digitized by Google

up life and spirit in a state. Those who are even slightly read in our philosophy, know that of all prejudices, the silliest is an attachment to forms.

*Cri.* To say no more upon so clear a point, the overturning of a government may be justified upon the same principles as the burning a town, would produce parallel effects, and equally contribute to the public good. In both cases, the natural springs of action are forcibly exerted; and, in this general industry, what one loses another gets, a quick circulation of wealth and power making the sum total to flourish.

*Euph.* And do the minute philosophers publish these things to the world?

*Lys.* It must be confessed our writers proceed in Politics with greater caution than they think necessary with regard to Religion.

*Cri.* But those things plainly follow from their principles, and are to be admitted for the genuine doctrine of the sect, expressed perhaps with more freedom and perspicuity than might be thought prudent by those who would manage the public, or not offend weak brethren.

*Euph.* And pray, is there not need of caution, a rebel or incendiary being characters that many men have a prejudice against?

*Lys.* Weak people of all ranks have a world of absurd prejudices.

*Euph.* But the better sort, such as statesmen and legislators; do you think they have not the same indisposition towards admitting your principles?

*Lys.* Perhaps they may; but the reason is plain.

*Cri.* This puts me in mind of that ingenious philosopher, the gamester Glaucus, who used to say, that statesmen and law-givers may keep a stir about right and wrong, just and unjust, but that, in truth, property of every kind had so often passed from the right owners by fraud and violence that it was now to be considered as lying on the common, and with equal right belonged to every one that could seize it.

*Euph.* What are we to think then of laws and regulations relating to right and wrong, crimes and duties?

*Lys.* They serve to bind weak minds, and keep the vulgar



Digitized by Google

in awe: but no sooner doth a true genius arise, but he breaks his way to greatness through all the trammels of duty, conscience, religion, law; to all which he sheweth himself infinitely superior.

9. *Euph.* You are, it seems, for bringing about a thorough reformation?

*Lys.* As to what is commonly called the Reformation, I could never see how or wherein the world was the better for it. It is much the same as Popery, with this difference, that it is the more prude-like and disagreeable thing of the two. A noted writer of ours makes it too great a compliment, when he computes the benefit of hooped petticoats to be nearly equal to that of the Reformation.[1] Thorough reformation is thorough liberty. Leave nature at full freedom to work her own way, and all will be well. This is what we aim at, and nothing short of this can come up to our principles.

Crito, who is a zealous protestant, hearing these words, could not refrain. The worst effect of the Reformation, said he, was the rescuing wicked men from a darkness which kept them in awe. This, as it hath proved, was holding out light to robbers and murderers. Light in itself is good, and the same light which shews a man the folly of superstition, might shew him the truth of religion, and the madness of atheism. But, to make use of light only to see the evils on one side, and never to see, but to run blindly upon the worst extreme —this is to make the best of things produce evil, in the same sense as you prove the worst of things to produce good, to wit, accidentally or indirectly: and, by the same method of arguing, you may prove that even diseases are useful: but whatever benefit seems to accrue to the public, either from disease of mind or body, is not their genuine offspring, and may be obtained without them.

Lysicles was a little disconcerted by the affirmative air of Crito; but, after a short pause, replied briskly, That to contemplate the public good was not every one's talent.

True, said Euphranor, I question whether every one can frame a notion of the public good, much less judge of the means to promote it?

[1] "Fable," p. 411.—ED.

Digitized by Google

10. But you, Lysicles, who are master of this subject, will be pleased to inform me, whether the public good of a nation doth not imply the particular good of its individuals?

*Lys.* It doth.

*Euph.* And doth not the good or happiness of a man consist in having both soul and body sound and in good condition, enjoying those things which their respective natures require, and free from those things which are odious or hurtful to them?

*Lys.* I do not deny all this to be true.

*Euph.* Now, it would seem worth while to consider, whether the regular decent life of a virtuous man may not as much conduce to this end as the mad sallies of intemperance and debauchery.

*Lys.* I will acknowledge that a nation may merely subsist, or be kept alive, but it is impossible it should flourish without the aid of vice. To produce a quick circulation of traffic and wealth in a state, there must be exorbitant and irregular motions in the appetites and passions.

*Euph.* The more people a nation contains, and the happier those people are, the more that nation may be said to flourish. I think we are agreed in this point.

*Lys.* We are.

*Euph.* You allow then that riches are not an ultimate end, but should only be considered as the means to procure happiness?

*Lys.* I do.

*Euph.* It seems that means cannot be of use without our knowing the end, and how to apply them to it?

*Lys.* It seems so.

*Euph.* Will it not follow that in order to make a nation flourish it is not sufficient to make it wealthy, without knowing the true end and happiness of mankind, and how to apply wealth towards attaining that end. In proportion as these points are known and practised, I think the nation should be likely to flourish. But, for a people who neither know nor practise them, to gain riches seems to me the same advantage that it would be for a sick man to come at plenty of meat and drink, which he could not use but to his hurt.

*Lys.* This is mere sophistry; it is arguing without persuading. Look into common life; examine the pursuits of

Digitized by Google

men: have a due respect for the consent of the world; and you will soon be convinced that riches alone are sufficient to make a nation flourishing and happy. Give them riches and they will make themselves happy, without that political invention, that trick of statesmen and philosophers, called virtue.

11. *Euph.* Virtue then, in your account, is a trick of statesmen?

*Lys.* It is.

*Euph.* Why then do your sagacious sect betray and divulge that trick or secret of state, which wise men have judged necessary for the good government of the world?

Lysicles hesitating, Crito made answer, That he presumed it was because their sect, being wiser than all other wise men, disdained to see the world governed by wrong maxims, and would set all things on a right bottom.

*Euph.* Thus much is certain. If we look into all institutions of government, and the political writings of such as have heretofore passed for wise men, we shall find a great regard for virtue.

*Lys.* You shall find a strong tincture of prejudice; but, as I said before, consult the multitude if you would find nature and truth.

*Euph.* But, among country gentlemen, and farmers, and the better sort of tradesmen, is not virtue a reputable thing?

*Lys.* You pick up authorities among men of low life and vile education.

*Euph.* Perhaps we ought to pay a decent respect to the authority of minute philosophers.

*Lys.* And I would fain know whose authority should be more considered than that of those gentlemen, who are alone above prejudice, and think for themselves.

*Euph.* How doth it appear that you are the only unprejudiced part of mankind? May not a minute philosopher, as well as another man, be prejudiced in favour of the leaders of his sect? May not an atheistical education prejudice towards atheism? What should hinder a man's being prejudiced against religion, as well as for it? Or can you assign any reason why an attachment to pleasure, interest, vice, or vanity, may not be supposed to prejudice men against virtue?

*Lys.* This is pleasant. What! suppose those very men

Digitized by Google

influenced by prejudice who are always disputing against it, whose constant aim it is to detect and demolish prejudices of all kinds!

Except their own, replied Crito; for, you must pardon me if I cannot help thinking they have some small prejudice, though not in favour of virtue.

12. I observe, Lysicles, that you allowed to Euphranor, the greater number of happy people there are in a state, the more that state may be said to flourish: it follows, therefore, that such methods as multiply inhabitants are good, and such as diminish them are bad, for the public. And one would think nobody need be told, that the strength of a state consists more in the number and sort of people than in anything else. But, in proportion as vice and luxury, those public blessings encouraged by this minute philosophy, prevail among us, fewer are disposed to marry, too many being diverted by pleasure, disabled by disease, or frightened by expense. Nor doth vice only thin a nation, but also debaseth it by a puny degenerate race. I might add that it is ruinous to our manufactures; both as it makes labour dear, and thereby enables our more frugal neighbours to undersell us: and also as it diverts the lower sort of people from honest callings to wicked projects. If these and such considerations were taken into account, I believe it would be evident to any man in his senses that the imaginary benefits of vice bear no proportion to the solid real woes that attend it.

Lysicles, upon this, shook his head, and smiled at Crito, without vouchsafing any answer. After which, addressing himself to Euphranor, There cannot, said he, be a stronger instance of prejudice than that a man should at this time of day preserve a reverence for that idol Virtue, a thing so effectually exposed and exploded by the most knowing men of the age, who have shewn that a man is a mere engine, played upon and driven about by sensible objects; and that moral virtue is only a name, a notion, a chimera, an enthusiasm, or at best a fashion, uncertain and changeable, like all other fashions.[1]

[1] In morals there is no greater certainty than in fashions. "Fable of the Bees," Part I., p. 379. (Note added in edition of 1752.—ED.)

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* What do you think, Lysicles, of health; doth it depend on fancy and caprice, or is it something real in the bodily composition of a man?

*Lys.* Health is something real, which results from the right constitution and temperature of the organs and the fluids circulating through them.

*Euph.* This you say is health of body?

*Lys.* It is.

*Euph.* And may we not suppose a healthy constitution of soul, when the notions are right, the judgments true, the will regular, the passions and appetites directed to their proper objects, and confined within due bounds? This, in regard to the soul, seems what health is to the body. And the man whose mind is so constituted, is he not properly called virtuous? And to produce this healthy disposition in the minds of his countrymen, should not every good man employ his endeavours? If these things have any appearance of truth, as to me they seem to have, it will not then be so clear a point that virtue is a mere whim or fashion, as you are pleased to represent it—I must own something unexpectedly, after what had been discoursed in last evening's conference, which, if you would call to mind, might perhaps save both of us some trouble.

*Lys.* Would you know the truth, Euphranor? I must own I have quite forgot all your discourse about virtue, duty, and all such points, which, being of an airy notional nature, are apt to vanish, and leave no trace on a mind accustomed only to receive impression from realities.

13. Having heard these words, Euphranor looked at Crito and me, and said, smiling, I have mistaken my part! it was mine to learn, and his to instruct. Then, addressing himself to Lysicles, Deal faithfully, said he, and let me know, whether the public benefit of vice be in truth that which makes you plead for it?

*Lys.* I love to speak frankly what I think. Know then that private interest is the first and principal consideration with philosophers of our sect. Now of all interests pleasure is that which hath the strongest charms, and no pleasures like those which are heightened and enlivened by licence. Herein consists the peculiar excellency of our principles,

Digitized by Google

that they shew people how to serve their country by diverting themselves, causing the two streams of public spirit and self-love to unite and run in the same channel. I have told you already that I admit a nation might subsist by the rules of virtue. But, give me leave to say, it will barely subsist, in a dull joyless insipid state; whereas the sprightly excesses of vice inspire men with joy. And where particulars rejoice, the public, which is made up of particulars, must do so too: that is, the public must be happy. This I take to be an irrefragable argument. But, to give you its full force, and make it as plain as possible, I will trace things from their original. Happiness is the end to which created beings naturally tend; but we find that all animals, whether men or brutes, do naturally and principally pursue real pleasure of sense; which is therefore to be thought their supreme good, their true end and happiness. It is for this men live; and whoever understands life must allow that man to enjoy the top and flower of it who hath a quick sense of pleasure, and withal spirit, skill, and fortune sufficient to gratify every appetite and every taste. Niggards and fools will envy or traduce such a one because they cannot equal him. Hence all that sober trifling in disparagement of what every one would be master of if he could, a full freedom and unlimited scope of pleasure.

*Euph.* Let me see whether I understand you. Pleasure of sense, you say, is the chief pleasure?

*Lys.* I do.

*Euph.* And this would be cramped and diminished by virtue?

*Lys.* It would.

*Euph.* Tell me, Lysicles, is pleasure then at the height when the appetites are satisfied?

*Lys.* There is then only an idolence, the lively sense of pleasure being past.

*Euph.* It should seem therefore, that the appetites must be always craving, to preserve pleasure alive?

*Lys.* That is our sense of the matter.

*Euph.* The Greek philosopher, therefore, was in the right, who considered the body of a man of pleasure as a leaky vessel, always filling and never full.

*Lys.* You may divert yourself with allegories, if you please.

Digitized by Google

But all the while ours is literally the true taste of nature. Look throughout the universe, and you shall find birds and fishes, beasts and insects, all kinds of animals, with which the creation swarms, constantly engaged by instinct in the pursuit of sensible pleasure. And shall man alone be the grave fool who thwarts, and crosses, and subdues his appetites, whilst his fellow-creatures do all most joyfully and freely indulge them?

*Euph.* How! Lysicles! I thought that being governed by the senses, appetites, and passions was the most grievous slavery; and that the proper business of free-thinkers, or philosophers, had been to set men from the power of ambition, avarice, and sensuality!

*Lys.* You mistake the point. We make men relish the world, attentive to their interests, lively and luxurious in their pleasures, without fear or restraint either from God or man. We despise those preaching writers, who used to disturb or cramp the pleasures and amusements of human life. We hold that a wise man who meddles with business doth it altogether for his interest, and refers his interest to his pleasure. With us it is a maxim, that a man should seize the moments as they fly. Without love, and wine, and play, and late hours we hold life not to be worth living. I grant, indeed, that there is something gross and ill-bred in the vices of mean men, which the genteel philosopher abhors.

*Cri.* But to cheat, whore, betray, get drunk, do all these things decently, this is true wisdom, and elegance of taste.

14. *Euph.* To me, who have been used to another way of thinking, this new philosophy seems difficult to digest. I must, therefore, beg leave to examine its principles with the same freedom that you do those of other sects.

*Lys.* Agreed.

*Euph.* You say, if I mistake not, that a wise man pursues only his private interest, and that this consists in sensual pleasure; for proof whereof you appeal to nature. Is not this what you advance?

*Lys.* It is.

*Euph.* You conclude, therefore, that, as other animals are

Digitized by Google

guided by natural instinct, man too ought to follow the dictates of sense and appetite?

*Lys.* I do.

*Euph.* But in this do you not argue as if man had only sense and appetite for his guides, on which supposition there might be truth in what you say? But what if he hath intellect, reason, a higher instinct and a nobler life? If this be the case, and you, being man, live like a brute, is it not the way to be defrauded of your true happiness? to be mortified and disappointed? Consider most sort of brutes, you shall perhaps find them have a greater share of sensual happiness than man.

*Lys.* To our sorrow we do. This hath made several gentlemen of our sect envy brutes, and lament the lot of human-kind.

*Cri.* It was a consideration of this sort which inspired Erotylus with the laudable ambition of wishing himself a snail, upon hearing of certain particularities discovered in that animal by a modern virtuoso.

*Euph.* Tell me, Lysicles, if you had an inexhaustible fund of gold and silver, should you envy another for having a little more copper than you?

*Lys.* I should not.

*Euph.* Are not reason, imagination, and sense, faculties differing in kind, and in rank higher one than another?

*Lys.* I do not deny it.

*Euph.* Their acts therefore differ in kind?

*Lys.* They do.

*Euph.* Consequently the pleasures perfective of those acts are also different.

*Lys.* They are.

*Euph.* You admit, therefore, three sorts of pleasure:—pleasure of reason, pleasure of imagination, and pleasure of sense.

*Lys.* I do.

*Euph.* And, as it is reasonable to think the operation of the highest and noblest faculty to be attended with the highest pleasure, may we not suppose the two former to be as gold or silver, and the latter only as copper? whence it should seem to follow that man need not envy or imitate a brute.

*Lys.* And, nevertheless, there are very ingenious men who

Digitized by Google

do. And surely every one may be allowed to know what he wants, and wherein his true happiness consists.

*Euph.* Is it not plain that different animals have different pleasures? Take a hog from his ditch or dunghill, lay him on a rich bed, treat him with sweetmeats, and music, and perfumes. All these things will be no entertainment to him. Do not a bird, a beast, a fish amuse themselves in various manners, insomuch that what is pleasing to one may be death to another? Is it ever seen that one of those animals quits its own element or way of living, to adopt that of another? and shall man quit his own nature to imitate a brute?

*Lys.* But sense is not only natural to brutes; is it not also natural to man?

*Euph.* It is, but with this difference: it maketh the whole of a brute, but is the lowest part or faculty of a human soul. The nature of anything is peculiarly that which doth distinguish it from other things, not what it hath in common with them. Do you allow this to be true?

*Lys.* I do.

*Euph.* And is not reason that which makes the principal difference between man and other animals?

*Lys.* It is.

*Euph.* Reason, therefore, being the principal part of our nature, whatever is most reasonable should seem most natural to man. Must we not therefore think rational pleasures more agreeable to human-kind than those of sense? Man and beast, having different natures, seem to have different faculties, different enjoyments, and different sorts of happiness. You can easily conceive, that the sort of life which makes the happiness of a mole or a bat would be a very wretched one for an eagle. And may you not as well conceive that the happiness of a brute can never constitute the true happiness of a man? A beast, without reflexion or remorse, without foresight, or appetite of immortality, without notion of vice or virtue, or order, or reason, or knowledge! What motive, what grounds, can there be for bringing down man, in whom are all these things, to a level with such a creature? What merit, what ambition, in the minute philosopher to make such an animal a guide or rule for human life?

Digitized by Google

15. *Lys.* It is strange, Euphranor, that one who admits freedom of thought, as you do, should yet be such a slave to prejudice. You still talk of order and virtue, as of real things, as if our philosophers had never demonstrated that they have no foundation in nature, and are only the effects of education.

I know, said Crito, how the minute philosophers are accustomed to demonstrate this point. They consider the animal nature of man, or man so far forth as he is animal; and it must be owned that, considered in that light, he hath no sense of duty, no notion of virtue. He, therefore, who should look for virtue among mere animals, or human-kind as such, would look in the wrong place. But that philosopher who is attentive only to the animal part of his being, and raiseth his theories from the very dregs of our species, might probably, upon second thoughts, find himself mistaken.

Look you, Crito, said Lysicles, my argument is with Euphranor; to whom addressing his discourse:—I observe, said he, that you stand much upon the dignity of human nature. This thing of dignity is an old worn-out notion, which depends on other notions, old and stale, and worn-out, such as an immaterial spirit, and a ray derived from the Divinity. But in these days men of sense make a jest of all this grandeur and dignity; and many there are would gladly exchange their share of it for the repose, and freedom, and sensuality of a brute. But comparisons are odious; waiving therefore all inquiry concerning the respective excellencies of man and beast, and whether it is beneath a man to follow or imitate brute animals, in judging of the chief good, and conduct of life and manners, I shall be content to appeal to the authority of men themselves for the truth of my notions. Do but look abroad into the world, and ask the common run of men, whether pleasure of sense be not the only true, solid, substantial good of their kind?

*Euph.* But might not the same vulgar sort of men prefer a piece of sign-post painting to one of Raphael's, or a Grub-street ballad to an ode of Horace? Is there not a real difference between good and bad writing?

*Lys.* There is.

*Euph.* And yet you will allow there must be a maturity

Digitized by Google

and improvement of understanding to discern this difference, which doth not make it therefore less real?

*Lys.* I will.

*Euph.* In the same manner, what should hinder but there may be in nature a true difference between vice and virtue, although it require some degree of reflexion and judgment to observe it? In order to know whether a thing be agreeable to the rational nature of man, it seems one should rather observe and consult those who have most employed or improved their reason.

*Lys.* Well, I shall not insist on consulting the common herd of mankind. From the ignorant and gross vulgar, I might myself appeal in many cases to men of rank and fashion.

*Euph.* They are a sort of men I have not the honour to know much of by my own observation. But I remember a remark of Aristotle, who was himself a courtier, and knew them well. "Virtue," saith he,[1] "and good sense are not the property of high birth or a great estate. Nor if they who possess these advantages, wanting a taste for rational pleasure, betake themselves to those of sense, ought we therefore to esteem them eligible, any more than we should the toys and pastimes of children, because they seem so to them?" And indeed one may be allowed to question whether the truest estimate of things was to be expected from a mind intoxicated with luxury, and dazzled with the splendour of high living.

> Cum stupet insanis acies fulgoribus, et cum
> Acclinis falsis animus meliora recusat.—HOR.

Crito upon this observed that he knew an English nobleman who in the prime of life professeth a liberal art, and is the first man of his profession in the world;[2] and that he was very sure he had more pleasure from the exercise of that elegant art than from any sensual enjoyment within the power of one of the largest fortunes and most bountiful spirits in Great Britain.

16. *Lys.* But why need we have recourse to the judgment

[1] "Ethic. ad Nicom.," lib. x. c. vi.

[2] Probably Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington, famous for his architectural tastes.—ED.

Digitized by Google

of other men in so plain a case? I appeal to your own breast, consult that, and then say if sensible pleasure be not the chief good of man.

*Euph.* I, for my part, have often thought those pleasures which are highest in the esteem of sensualists, so far from being the chiefest good, that it seemed doubtful, upon the whole, whether they were any good at all, any more than the mere removal of pain. Are not our wants and appetites uneasy?

*Lys.* They are.

*Euph.* Doth not sensual pleasure consist in satisfying them?

*Lys.* It doth.

*Euph.* But the cravings are tedious, the satisfaction momentary. Is it not so?

*Lys.* It is; but what then?

*Euph.* Why then it should seem that sensual pleasure is but a short deliverance from long pain. A long avenue of uneasiness leads to a point of pleasure, which ends in disgust or remorse.

*Cri.* And he who pursues this *ignis fatuus* imagines himself a philosopher and free-thinker.

*Lys.* Pedants are governed by words and notions, while the wiser men of pleasure follow fact, nature, and sense.

*Cri.* But what if notional pleasures should in fact prove the most real and lasting? Pure pleasures of reason and imagination neither hurt the health, nor waste the fortune, nor gall the conscience. By them the mind is long entertained without loathing or satiety. On the other hand, a notion (which with you it seems passeth for nothing) often embitters the most lively sensual pleasures; which at bottom will be found also to depend upon notion more than perhaps you imagine: it being a vulgar remark, that those things are more enjoyed by hope and foretaste of the soul than by possession. Thus much is yielded, that the actual enjoyment is very short, and the alternative of appetite and disgust long as well as uneasy. So that, upon the whole, it should seem those gentlemen who are called men of pleasure, from their eager pursuit of it, do in reality, with great expense of fortune, ease, and health, purchase pain.

*Lys.* You may spin out plausible arguments, but will after all find it a difficult matter to convince me that so many in-

Digitized by Google

genious men should not be able to distinguish between things so directly opposite as pain and pleasure. How is it possible to account for this?

*Cri.* I believe a reason may be assigned for it, but to men of pleasure no truth is so palatable as a fable. Jove once upon a time having ordered that pleasure and pain should be mixed in equal proportions in every dose of human life; upon a complaint that some men endeavoured to separate what he had joined, and taking more than their share of the sweet, would leave all the sour for others, commanded Mercury to put a stop to this evil, by fixing on each delinquent a pair of invisible spectacles, which should change the appearance of things, making pain look like pleasure, and pleasure like pain, labour like recreation, and recreation like labour. From that time the men of pleasure are eternally mistaking and repenting.

*Lys.* If your doctrine takes place, I would fain know what can be the advantage of a great fortune, which all mankind so eagerly pursue.

*Cri.* It is a common saying with Eucrates, that *a great fortune is an edged tool, which a hundred may come at for one who knows how to use it*, so much easier is the art of getting than that of spending. What its advantage is I will not say, but I will venture to declare what it is not. I am sure that where abundance excludes want, and enjoyment prevents appetites, there is not the quickest sense of those pleasures we have been speaking of, in which the footman hath often a greater share than his lord, who cannot enlarge his stomach in proportion to his estate.

17. Reasonable and well-educated men of all ranks have, I believe, pretty much the same amusements, notwithstanding the difference of their fortunes: but those who are particularly distinguished as men of pleasure seem to possess it in a very small degree.

*Euph.* I have heard that among persons of that character a game of cards is esteemed a chief diversion.

*Lys.* Without cards there could be no living for people of fashion. It is the most delightful way of passing an evening when gentlemen and ladies are got together, who would otherwise be at a loss what to say or do with themselves.

Digitized by Google

But a pack of cards is so engaging that it doth not only employ them when they are met, but serves to draw them together. Quadrille gives them pleasure in prospect during the dull hours of the day, they reflect on it with delight, and it furnishes discourse when it is over.

*Cri.* One would be apt to suspect these people of condition pass their time but heavily, and are but little the better for their fortunes, whose chief amusement is a thing in the power of every porter or footman, who is as well qualified to receive pleasure from cards as a peer. I can easily conceive that, when people of a certain turn are got together, they should prefer doing anything to the ennui of their own conversation; but it is not easy to conceive there is any great pleasure in this. What a card-table can afford requires neither parts nor fortune to judge of.

*Lys.* Play is a serious amusement, that comes to the relief of a man of pleasure, after the more lively and affecting enjoyments of sense. It kills time beyond anything; and is a most admirable anodyne to divert or prevent thought, which might otherwise prey upon the mind.

*Cri.* I can easily comprehend that no man upon earth ought to prize anodynes for the spleen more than a man of fashion and pleasure. An ancient sage, speaking of one of that character, saith he is made wretched by disappointments and appetites, λυπεῖται ἀποτυγχάνων καὶ ἐπιθυμῶν. And if this was true of the Greeks, who lived in the sun, and had so much spirit, I am apt to think it is still more so of our modern English. Something there is in our climate and complexion that makes idleness nowhere so much its own punishment as in England, where an uneducated fine gentleman pays for his momentary pleasures, with long and cruel intervals of spleen: for relief of which he is driven into sensual excesses, that produce a proportionable depression of spirits, which, as it createth a greater want of pleasures, so it lessens the ability to enjoy them. There is a cast of thought in the complexion of an Englishman, which renders him the most unsuccessful rake in the world. He is (as Aristotle expresseth it) at variance with himself. He is neither brute enough to enjoy his appetites, nor man enough to govern them. He knows and feels that what he pursues is not his true good; his reflexion serving only to shew him that

Digitized by Google

misery which his habitual sloth and indolence will not suffer him to remedy. At length, being grown odious to himself, and abhorring his own company, he runs into every idle assembly, not from the hopes of pleasure, but merely to respite the pain of his own mind. Listless and uneasy at the present, he hath no delight in reflecting on what is past, or in the prospect of anything to come. This man of pleasure, when, after a wretched scene of vanity and woe, his animal nature is worn to the stumps, wishes and dreads death by turns, and is sick of living, without having ever tried or known the true life of man.

*Euph.* It is well this sort of life, which is of so little benefit to the owner, conduceth so much to that of the public. But pray tell me, do these gentlemen set up for minute philosophers?

*Cri.* That sect, you must know, contains two sorts of philosophers, the wet and the dry. Those I have been describing are of the former kind. They differ rather in practice than in theory. As an older, graver, or duller man, from one that is younger, and more capable or fond of pleasure. The dry philosopher passeth his time but dryly. He has the honour of pimping for the vices of more sprightly men, who in return offer some small incense to his vanity. Upon this encouragement, and to make his own mind easy when it is past being pleased, he employs himself in justifying those excesses he cannot partake in. But, to return to your question, those miserable folk are mighty men for the minute philosophy.

*Euph.* What hinders them then from putting an end to their lives?

*Cri.* Their not being persuaded of the truth of what they profess. Some, indeed, in a fit of despair, do now and then lay violent hands on themselves. And as the minute philosophy prevails, we daily see more examples of suicide. But they bear no proportion to those who would put an end to their lives if they durst. My friend Clinias, who had been one of them, and a philosopher of rank, let me into the secret history of their doubts, and fears, and irresolute resolutions of making away with themselves, which last he assures me is a frequent topic with men of pleasure, when they have drunk themselves into a little spirit. It was by

Digitized by Google

virtue of this mechanical valour the renowned philosopher Hermocrates shot himself through the head.[1] The same thing hath since been practised by several others, to the great relief of their friends. Splenetic, worried, and frightened out of their wits, they run upon their doom with the same courage as a bird runs into the mouth of a rattle-snake, not because they are bold to die, but because they are afraid to live. Clinias endeavoured to fortify his irreligion by the discourse and opinion of other minute philosophers, who were mutually strengthened in their unbelief by his. After this manner, authority working in a circle, they endeavoured to atheize one another. But, though he pretended even to a demonstration against the being of a God, yet he could not inwardly conquer his own belief. He fell sick, and acknowledged this truth, is now a sober man and a good Christian; owns he was never so happy as since he has become such, nor so wretched as while he was a minute philosopher. And he who has tried both conditions may be allowed a proper judge of both.

*Lys.* Truly a fine account of the brightest and bravest men of the age!

*Cri.* Bright and brave are fine attributes. But our curate is of opinion that all your free-thinking rakes are either fools or cowards. Thus he argues: if such a man doth not see his true interest, he wants sense; if he doth, but dare not pursue it, he wants courage. In this manner, from the defect of sense and courage, he deduceth that whole species of men, who are so apt to value themselves upon both those qualities.

*Lys.* As for their courage, they are at all times ready to give proof of it; and for their understanding, thanks to nature, it is of a size not to be measured by country parsons.

18. *Euph.* But Socrates, who was no country parson, suspected your men of pleasure were such through ignorance.

*Lys.* Ignorance of what?

[1] This probably refers to Charles Blount. Being unable to marry his deceased wife's sister, he shot himself (1693). Some, however, have asserted that his death was quite natural—the suicide a pretence. Five of his tracts were collected by C. Gildon and issued in 1695 as the "Miscellaneous Works of C. B."—with a preface defending suicide. —ED.



Digitized by Google

*Euph.* Of the art of computing. It was his opinion that rakes cannot reckon.[1] And that for want of this skill they make wrong judgments about pleasure, on the right choice of which their happiness depends.

*Lys.* I do not understand you.

*Euph.* Do you grant that sense perceiveth only sensible things?

*Lys.* I do.

*Euph.* Sense perceiveth only things present?

*Lys.* This too I grant.

*Euph.* Future pleasures, therefore, and pleasures of the understanding are not to be judged of by sense?

*Lys.* They are not.

*Euph.* Those therefore who judge of pleasure by sense may find themselves mistaken at the foot of the account.

> Cum lapidosa chiragra
> Contudit articulos veteris ramalia fagi,
> Tum crassos transisse dies lucemque palustrem,
> Et sibi jam seri vitam ingemuere relictam.[2]

To make a right computation, should you not consider all the faculties, and all the kinds of pleasure, taking into your account the future as well as the present, and rating them all according to their true value?

*Cri.* The Epicureans themselves allowed that pleasure which procures a greater pain, or hinders a greater pleasure, should be regarded as a pain; and, that pain which procures a greater pleasure, or prevents a greater pain, is to be accounted a pleasure. In order therefore to make a true estimate of pleasure, the great spring of action, and that from whence the conduct of life takes its bias, we ought to compute intellectual pleasures and future pleasures, as well as present and sensible; we ought to make allowance, in the valuation of each particular pleasure, for all the pains and evils, for all the disgust, remorse, and shame, that attend it; we ought to regard both kind and quantity, the sincerity, the intenseness, and the duration of pleasures. [3] Let a free-thinker but bethink himself, how little of human pleasure consists in actual

[1] Plato in Protag. [2] Persius, Sat. V

[3] What follows, to the end of this speech, was added to the second edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

sensation, and how much in prospect! Let him then compare the prospect of a virtuous believer, with that of an unbelieving rake.

*Euph.* And, all these points duly considered, will not Socrates seem to have had reason on his side, when he thought ignorance made rakes, and particularly their being ignorant of what he calls the science of more and less, greater and smaller, equality and comparison, that is to say, of the art of computing?

*Lys.* All this discourse seems notional. For real abilities of every kind, it is well known, we have the brightest men of the age among us. But all those who know the world do calculate that what you call a good Christian, who hath neither a large conscience, nor unprejudiced mind, must be unfit for the affairs of it. Thus you see, while you compute yourselves out of pleasure, others compute you out of business. What then are you good for with all your computation?

*Euph.* I have all imaginable respect for the abilities of free-thinkers. My only fear was, their parts might be too lively for such slow talents as forecast and computation, the gifts of ordinary men.

19. *Cri.* I cannot make them the same compliment that Euphranor does. For, though I shall not pretend to characterise the whole sect, yet thus much I may truly affirm: that those who have fallen in my way have been mostly raw men of pleasure, old sharpers in business, or a third sort of lazy sciolists, who are neither men of business, nor men of speculation, but set up for judges or critics in all kinds, without having made a progress in any. These, among men of the world, pass for profound theorists, and among speculative men would seem to know the world: a conceited race, equally useless to the affairs and studies of mankind. Such as these, for the most part, seem to be sectaries of the minute philosophy. I will not deny that now and then you may meet with a man of easy manners, that, without those faults and affectations, is carried into the party by the mere stream of education, fashion, or company; all which do in this age prejudice men against religion, even those who mechanically rail at prejudice. I must not forget that the minute philo-

Digitized by Google

sophers have also a strong party among the beaux and fine ladies; and, as affectations out of character are often the strongest, there is nothing so dogmatical and inconvincible as one of these fine things, when it sets up for free-thinking. But, be these professors of the sect never so dogmatical, their authority must needs be small with men of sense. For who would choose for his guide, in the search for truth, a man whose thoughts and time are taken up with dress, visits, and diversions? or whose education hath been behind the counter, or in an office? or whose speculations have been employed on the forms of business, who is only well read in the ways and commerce of mankind, in stockjobbing, purloining, supplanting, bribing? Or would any man in his senses give a fig for meditations and discoveries made over a bottle? And yet it is certain that, instead of thought, books, and study, most free-thinkers are the proselytes of a drinking club. Their principles are often settled, and decisions on the deepest points made, when they are not fit to make a bargain.

*Lys.* You forget our writers, Crito. They make a world of proselytes.

*Cri.* So would worse writers in such a cause. Alas! how few read! and of these, how few are able to judge! How many wish your notions true! How many had rather be diverted than instructed! How many are convinced by a title! I may allow your reasons to be effectual, without allowing them to be good. Arguments, in themselves of small weight, have great effect, when they are recommended by a mistaken interest, when they are pleaded for by passion, when they are countenanced by the humour of the age; and above all, with some sort of men, when they are against law, government, and established opinions: things which, as a wise and good man would not depart from without clear evidence, a weak or a bad man will affect to disparage on the slightest grounds.

*Lys.* And yet the arguments of our philosophers alarm.

*Cri.* The force of their reasoning is not what alarms: their contempt of laws and government is alarming: their application to the young and ignorant is dangerous.

*Euph.* But without disputing or disparaging their talent at ratiocination, it seems very possible their success might not

Digitized by Google

be owing to that alone. May it not in some measure be ascribed to the defects of others, as well as to their own perfections? My friend Eucrates used to say, that the church would thrive and flourish beyond all opposition, if some certain persons minded piety more than politics, practics than polemics, fundamentals than consectaries, substance than circumstance, things than notions, and notions than words.

*Lys.* Whatever may be the cause, the effects are too plain to be denied. And when a considering man observes that our notions do, in this most learned and knowing age, spread and multiply, in opposition to established laws, and every day gain ground against a body so numerous, so learned, so well supported, protected, and encouraged, for the service and defence of religion: I say, when a man observes and considers all this, he will be apt to ascribe it to the force of truth, and the merits of our cause; which, had it been supported with the revenues and establishments of the church and universities, you may guess what a figure it would make, by the figure that it makes without them.

*Euph.* It is much to be pitied that the learned professors of your sect do not meet with the encouragement they deserve.

*Lys.* All in due time. People begin to open their eyes. It is not impossible but those revenues that in ignorant times were applied to a wrong use may, hereafter, in a more enlightened age, be applied to a better.

*Cri.* But why professors and encouragement for what needs no teaching? An acquaintance of mine has a most ingenious footman that can neither write nor read, who learned your whole system in half an hour: he knows when and how to nod, shake his head, smile, and give a hint, as well as the ablest sceptic, and is in fact a very minute philosopher.

*Lys.* Pardon me, it takes time to unlearn religious prejudices, and requires a strong head.

*Cri.* I do not know how it might have been once upon a time. But in the present laudable education, I know several who have been imbued with no religious notions at all; and others who have had them so very slight, that they rubbed off without the least pains.

Digitized by Google

20. Panope, young and beautiful, under the care of her aunt, an admirer of the minute philosophy, was kept from learning the principles of religion, that she might not be accustomed to believe without a reason, nor assent to what she did not comprehend. Panope was not indeed prejudiced with religious notions, but got a notion of intriguing, and a notion of play, which ruined her reputation by fourteen, and her fortune by four-and-twenty. I have often reflected on the different fate of two brothers in my neighbourhood. Cleon, the elder, being designed an accomplished gentleman, was sent to town, and had the first part of his education in a great school: what religion he learned there was soon unlearned in a certain celebrated society, which, till we have a better, may pass for a nursery of minute philosophers. Cleon, dressed well, could cheat at cards, had a nice palate, understood the mystery of the die, was a mighty man in the minute philosophy; and having shined a few years in these accomplishments, he died before thirty, childless and rotten, expressing the utmost indignation that he could not outlive that old dog his father; who, having a great notion of polite manners, and knowledge of the world, had purchased them to his favourite son with much expense, but had been more frugal in the education of Chærephon, the younger son; who was brought up at a country school, and entered a commoner in the university, where he qualified himself for a parsonage in his father's gift, which he is now possessed of, together with the estate of the family, and a numerous offspring.

*Lys.* A pack of unpolished cubs, I warrant.

*Cri.* Less polished, perhaps, but more sound, more honest, and more useful, than many who pass for fine gentlemen. Crates, a worthy justice of the peace in this country, having had a son miscarry at London, by the conversation of a minute philosopher, used to say, with a great air of complaint: If a man spoils my corn, or hurts my cattle, I have a remedy against him; but if he spoils my children I have none.

*Lys.* I warrant you he was for penal methods: he would have had a law to persecute tender consciences.

*Cri.* The tender conscience of a minute philosopher! He who tutored the son of Crates soon after did justice on

Digitized by Google

himself. For he taught Lycidas, a modest young man, the principles of his sect. Lycidas, in return, debauched his daughter, an only child: upon which, Charmides (that was the minute philosopher's name) hanged himself. Old Bubalion in the city is carking, starving, and cheating, that his son may drink, game, and keep mistresses, hounds, and horses, and die in a jail. Bubalion nevertheless thinks himself wise, and passeth for one that minds the main chance. He is a minute philosopher, which learning he acquired behind the counter, from the works of Prodicus and Tryphon. This same Bubalion was one night at supper, talking against the immortality of the soul, with two or three grave citizens, one of whom the next day declared himself a bankrupt, with five thousand pounds of Bubalion's in his hands: and the night following he received a note from a servant, who had during his lecture waited at table, demanding the sum of fifty guineas to be laid under a stone, and concluding with most terrible threats and imprecations.

*Lys.* Not to repeat what hath been already demonstrated, that the public is at bottom no sufferer by such accidents, which in truth are inconvenient only to private persons, who in their turn too may reap the benefit of them; I say, not to repeat all that hath been demonstrated on that head, I shall only ask you whether there would not be rakes and rogues, although we did not make them? Believe me, the world always was, and always will be the same, as long as men are men.

*Cri.* I deny that the world is always the same. Human nature, to use Alciphron's comparison, is like land, better or worse, as it is improved, and according to the seeds or principles sown in it. Though nobody held your tenets, I grant there might be bad men by the force of corrupt appetites and irregular passions; but, where men, to the force of appetite and passion, add that of opinion, and are wicked from principle, there will be more men wicked, and those more incurably and outrageously so. The error of a lively rake lies in his passions, and may be reformed: but the dry rogue who sets up for judgment is incorrigible. It is an observation of Aristotle's, that there are two sorts of debauchees, the ἀκρατής, and the ἀκόλαστος, of which the one is so against his judgment, the other with it; and that there may be hopes of the former, but none of the latter. And

Digitized by Google

in fact I have always observed, that a rake who is a minute philosopher, when grown old, becomes a sharper in business.

*Lys.* I could name you several such who have grown most noted patriots.

*Cri.* Patriots! such patriots as Catiline and Mark Antony.

*Lys.* And what then? Those famous Romans were brave, though unsuccessful. They wanted neither sense nor courage; and if their schemes had taken effect, the brisker part of their countrymen had been much the better for them.

21. The wheels of government go on, though wound up by different hands; if not in the same form, yet in some other, perhaps a better. There is an endless variety in things. Weak men, indeed, are prejudiced towards rules and systems in life and government; and think if these are gone all is gone: but a man of a great soul and free spirit delights in the noble experiment of blowing up systems and dissolving governments, to mould them anew upon other principles and in another shape. Take my word for it, there is a plastic nature in things that seeks its own end. Pull a state to pieces, jumble, confound, and shake together the particles of human society, and then let them stand a while, and you shall soon see them settle of themselves in some convenient order, where heavy heads are lowest, and men of genius uppermost.

*Euph.* Lysicles speaks his mind freely.

*Lys.* Where was the advantage of free-thinking, if it were not attended with free-speaking; or of free-speaking, if it did not produce free-acting? We are for thorough, independent, original freedom. Inward freedom without outward is good for nothing but to set a man's judgment at variance with his practice.

*Cri.* This free way of Lysicles may seem new to you: it is not so to me. As the minute philosophers lay it down for a maxim, that there is nothing sacred of any kind, nothing but what may be made a jest of, exploded, and changed like the fashion of their clothes; so nothing is more frequent than for them to utter their schemes and principles, not only in select companies, but even in public.

In a certain part of the world, where ingenious men are wont to retail their speculations, I remember to have seen a

Digitized by Google

valetudinarian in a long wig and a cloak, sitting at the upper end of a table, with half-a-dozen disciples about him. After he had talked about religion, in a manner and with an air that would make one think atheism established by law, and religion only tolerated, he entered upon civil government; and observed to his audience, that the natural world was in a perpetual circulation. Animals, said he, which draw their sustenance from the earth, mix with that same earth, and in their turn become food for vegetables, which again nourish the animal kind: the vapours that ascend from this globe descend back upon it in showers; the elements alternately prey upon each other: that which one part of nature loseth another gains; the sum total remaining always the same, being neither bigger nor lesser, better nor worse, for all these intestine changes. Even so, said this learned professor, the revolutions in the civil world are no detriment to mankind; one part whereof rises as the other falls, and wins by another's loss. A man therefore who thinks deeply, and hath an eye on the whole system, is no more a bigot to government than to religion. He knows how to suit himself to occasions, and make the best of every event: for the rest, he looks on all translations of power and property from one hand to another with a philosophic indifference. Our lecturer concluded his discourse with a most ingenious analysis of all political and moral virtues into their first principles and causes, shewing them to be mere fashions, tricks of state, and illusions on the vulgar.

*Lys.* We have been often told of the good effects of religion and learning, churches and universities: but I dare affirm that a dozen or two ingenious men of our sect have done more towards advancing real knowledge, by extemporaneous lectures, in the compass of a few years, than all the ecclesiastics put together for as many centuries.

*Euph.* And the nation no doubt thrives accordingly; but it seems, Crito, you have heard them discourse.

*Cri.* Upon hearing this, and other lectures of the same tendency, methought it was needless to establish professors for the minute philosophy in either university; while there are so many spontaneous lecturers in every corner of the streets, ready to open men's eyes, and rub off their prejudices about religion, loyalty, and public spirit.

Digitized by Google

*Lys.* If wishing was to any purpose, I could wish for a telescope that might draw into my view things future in time, as well as distant in place. Oh! that I could but look into the next age, and behold what it is that we are preparing to be, the glorious harvest of our principles: the spreading of which hath produced a visible tendency in the nation towards something great and new.

*Cri.* One thing I dare say you would expect to see, be the changes and agitations of the public what they will, that is, every free-thinker upon his legs. You are all sons of nature, who cheerfully follow the fortunes of the common mass.

*Lys.* And it must be owned we have a maxim, that *each should take care of one.*

*Cri.* Alas, Lysicles, you wrong your own character. You would feign pass upon the world, and upon yourselves, for interested cunning men: but can anything be more disinterested than to sacrifice all regards to the abstracted speculation of truth? Or can anything be more void of all cunning than to publish your discoveries to the world, teach others to play the whole game, and arm mankind against yourselves?

22. If a man may venture to suggest so mean a thought as the love of their country to souls fired with the love of truth, and the love of liberty, and grasping the whole extent of nature; I would humbly propose it to you, gentlemen, to observe the caution practised by all other discoverers, projectors, and makers of experiments, who never hazard all on the first trial. Would it not be prudent to try the success of your principles on a small model in some remote corner? For instance, set up a colony of atheists in Monomotapa, and see how it prospers, before you proceed any farther at home: half-a-dozen ship-loads of minute philosophers might easily be spared upon so good a design. In the meantime, you gentlemen, who have found out that there is nothing to be hoped or feared in another life, that conscience is a bugbear, that the bands of government and the cement of human society are rotten things, to be resolved and crumbled into nothing by the argumentation of every minute philosopher: be so good as to keep these sublime discoveries to yourselves: suffer us, our wives, our children, our servants, and

Digitized by Google

our neighbours, to continue in the belief and way of thinking established by the laws of our country. In good earnest, I wish you would go try your experiments among the Hottentots or Turks.

*Lys.* The Hottentots we think well of, believing them to be an unprejudiced people: but it is to be feared their diet and customs would not agree with our philosophers. As for the Turks, they are bigots, who have a notion of God, and a respect for Jesus Christ; I question whether it might be safe to venture among them.

*Cri.* Make your experiment then in some other part of Christendom.

*Lys.* We hold all other Christian nations to be much under the power of prejudice: even our neighbours the Dutch are too much prejudiced in favour of their religion by law established for a prudent man to attempt innovations under their government. Upon the whole, it seems we can execute our schemes nowhere with so much security and such prospect of success as at home. Not to say that we have already made a good progress. Oh! that we could but once see a parliament of true, staunch, libertine free-thinkers!

*Cri.* God forbid! I should be sorry to have such men for my servants, not to say, for my masters.

*Lys.* In that we differ.

23. But you will agree with me that the right way to come at this was to begin with extirpating the prejudices of particular persons. We have carried on this work for many years with much art and industry, and at first with secrecy, working like moles under ground, concealing our progress from the public, and our ultimate views from many, even of our own proselytes, blowing the coals between polemical divines, laying hold on and improving every incident which the passions and folly of churchmen afforded to the advantage of our sect. As our principles obtained, we still proceeded to farther inferences; and as our numbers multiplied, we gradually disclosed ourselves and our opinions: where we are now I need not say. We have stubbed, and weeded, and cleared human nature to that degree that, in a little time, leaving it alone without any labouring or teaching, you shall see natural and just ideas sprout forth of themselves.

Digitized by Google

*Cri.* But I have heard a man, who had lived long and observed much, remark, that the worst and most unwholesome weed was this same minute philosophy. We have had, said he, divers epidemical distempers in the state, but this hath produced of all others the most destructive plague. Enthusiasm had its day, its effects were violent and soon over; this infects more quietly, but spreads widely: the former bred a fever in the state; this breeds a consumption and final decay. A rebellion or an invasion alarms, and puts the public upon its defence; but a corruption of principles works its ruin more slowly perhaps, but more surely.

This may be illustrated by a fable I somewhere met with in the writings of a Swiss philosopher, setting forth the original of brandy and gunpowder. The government of the north being once upon a time vacant, the prince of the power of the air convened a council in hell, wherein, upon competition between two demons of rank, it was determined they should both make trial of their abilities, and he should succeed who did most mischief. One made his appearance in the shape of gunpowder, the other in that of brandy: the former was a declared enemy, and roared with a terrible noise, which made folks afraid, and put them on their guard; the other passed as a friend and a physician through the world, disguised himself with sweets, and perfumes, and drugs, made his way into the ladies' cabinets and the apothecaries' shops, and, under the notion of helping digestion, comforting the spirits, and cheering the heart, produced direct contrary effects; and, having insensibly thrown great numbers of human-kind into a lingering but fatal decay, was found to people hell and the grave so fast as to merit the government which he still possesses.

24. *Lys.* Those who please may amuse themselves with fables and allegories. This is plain English: liberty is a good thing, and we are the support of liberty.

*Cri.* To me it seems that liberty and virtue were made for each other. If any man wish to enslave his country, nothing is a fitter preparative than vice; and nothing leads to vice so surely as irreligion. For my part, I cannot comprehend or find out, after having considered it in all lights, how this crying down religion should be the effect of honest views to-

Digitized by Google

wards a just and legal liberty. Some seem to propose an indulgence in vice; others may have in prospect the advantage which needy and ambitious men are used to make in the ruin of a state. One may indulge a pert petulant spirit; another hope to be esteemed among libertines, when he wants wit to please, or abilities to be useful. But, be men's views what they will, let us examine what good your principles have done: who has been the better for the instructions of these minute philosophers? Let us compare what we are in respect of learning, loyalty, honesty, wealth, power, and public spirit, with what we have been. Free-thinking (as it is called) hath wonderfully grown of late years. Let us see what hath grown up with it, or what effects it hath produced. To make a catalogue of ills is disagreeable; and the only blessing it can pretend to is luxury: that same blessing which revenged the world upon old Rome; that same luxury that makes a nation, like a diseased pampered body, look full and fat with one foot in the grave.

*Lys.* You mistake the matter. There are no people who think and argue better about the public good of a state than our sect; who have also invented many things tending to that end which we cannot as yet conveniently put in practice.

*Cri.* But one point there is from which it must be owned the public hath already received some advantage, which is the effect of your principles, flowing from them, and spreading as they do: I mean that old Roman practice of self-murder, which at once puts an end to all distress, ridding the world and themselves of the miserable.

*Lys.* You were pleased before to make some reflexions on this custom, and laugh at the irresolution of our free-thinkers: but I can aver for matter of fact that they have often recommended it by their example as well as arguments; and that it is solely owing to them that a practice, so useful and magnanimous, hath been taken out of the hands of lunatics, and restored to that credit among men of sense which it anciently had. In whatever light you may consider it, this is in fact a solid benefit. But the best effect of our principles is that light and truth so visibly shed abroad in the world. From how many prejudices, errors, perplexities, and contradictions have we freed the minds of our fellow-subjects! How many hard words and intricate absurd notions had

Digitized by Google

possessed the minds of men before our philosophers appeared in the world! But now even women and children have right and sound notions of things. What say you to this, Crito?

*Cri.* I say, with respect to these great advantages of destroying men and notions, that I question whether the public gains as much by the latter as it loseth by the former. For my own part, I had rather my wife and children all believed what they had no notion of, and daily pronounced words without a meaning, than that any one of them should cut his throat, or leap out of a window. Errors and nonsense, as such, are of small concern in the eyes of the public; which considereth not the metaphysical truth of notions, so much as the tendency they have to produce good or evil. Truth itself is valued by the public, as it hath an influence, and is felt in the course of life. You may confute a whole shelf of schoolmen, and discover many speculative truths, without any great merit towards your country. But if I am not mistaken, the minute philosophers are not the men to whom we are most beholden for discoveries of that kind: this I say must be allowed, supposing, what I by no means grant, your notions to be true. For, to say plainly what I think, the tendency of your opinions is so bad that no good man can endure them, and your arguments for them so weak that no wise man will admit them.

*Lys.* Has it not been proved as clear as the meridian sun that the politer sort of men lead much happier lives, and swim in pleasure, since the spreading of our principles? But, not to repeat or insist further on what has been so amply deduced, I shall only add that the advantages flowing from them extend to the tenderest age and the softer sex: our principles deliver children from terrors by night, and ladies from splenetic hours by day.

*Cri.* Instead of these old-fashioned things, prayers and the Bible, the grateful amusements of drams, dice, and billet-doux have succeeded. The fair sex have now nothing to do but dress and paint, drink and game, adorn and divert themselves, and enter into all the sweet society of life.[1] But I

[1] This ironical commencement to Crito's speech was given as a serious ending to the preceding speech of Lysicles, in the first and second editions.—ED.

Digitized by Google

thought, Lysicles, the argument from pleasure had been exhausted. But, since you have not done with that point, let us once more, by Euphranor's rule, cast up the account of pleasure and pain, as credit and debt, under distinct articles. We will set down in the life of your fine lady rich clothes, dice, cordials, scandal, late hours, against vapours, distaste, remorse, losses at play, and the terrible distress of ill-spent age increasing every day: suppose no cruel accident of jealousy, no madness or infamy of love, yet, at the foot of the account, you shall find that empty, giddy, gaudy, fluttering thing, not half so happy as a butterfly or a grasshopper on a summer's day. And for a rake or man of pleasure, the reckoning will be much the same, if you place listlessness, ignorance, rottenness, loathing, craving, quarrelling, and such qualities or accomplishments, over against his little circle of fleeting amusements; long woe against momentary pleasure; and if it be considered that, when sense and appetite go off, though he seek refuge from his conscience in the minute philosophy, yet in this you will find, if you sift him to the bottom, that he affects much, believes little, knows nothing.

Upon which, Lysicles, turning to me, observed, that Crito might dispute against fact if he pleased, but that every one must see the nation was the merrier for their principles.

True, answered Crito, we are a merry nation indeed: young men laugh at the old; children despise their parents; and subjects make a jest of the government: happy effects of the minute philosophy!

25. *Lys.* Infer what effects you please: that will not make our principles less true.

*Cri.* Their truth is not what I am now considering. The point at present is the usefulness of your principles. And to decide this point we need only take a short view of them fairly proposed and laid together:—that there is no God or providence: that man is as the beasts that perish: that his happiness as theirs consists in obeying animal instincts, appetites, and passions: that all stings of conscience and sense of guilt are prejudices and errors of education: that religion is a state trick: that vice is beneficial to the public: that the soul of man is corporeal, and dissolveth like a flame

Digitized by Google

or vapour: that man is a machine actuated according to the laws of motion: that consequently he is no agent, or subject of guilt: that a wise man will make his own particular individual interest in this present life the rule and measure of all his actions: these, and such opinions, are, it seems, the tenets of a minute philosopher, who is himself, according to his own principles, an organ played on by sensible objects, a ball bandied about by appetites and passions: so subtle is he as to be able to maintain all this by artful reasonings; so sharp-sighted and penetrating to the very bottom of things as to find out that the most interested occult cunning is the only true wisdom. To complete his character, this curious piece of clock-work, having no principle of action within itself, and denying that it hath or can have any one free thought or motion, sets up for the patron of liberty, and earnestly contends for *free-thinking*.

Crito had no sooner made an end but Lysicles addressed himself to Euphranor and me: Crito, said he, has taken a world of pains, but convinced me only of one single point, to wit, that I must despair of convincing him. Never did I in the whole course of my life meet with a man so deeply immersed in prejudice; let who will pull him out for me. But I entertain better hopes of you.

I can answer, said I, for myself, that my eyes and ears are always open to conviction: I am attentive to all that passes, and upon the whole shall form, whether right or wrong, a very impartial judgment.

Crito, said Euphranor, is a more enterprising man than I, thus to rate and lecture a philosopher. For my part, I always find it easier to learn than to teach. I shall therefore beg your assistance to rid me of some scruples about the tendency of your opinions; which I find myself unable to master, though never so willing. This done, though we should not tread exactly in the same steps, nor perhaps go the same road, yet we shall not run in all points diametrically opposite one to another.

26. Tell me now, Lysicles, you who are a minute observer of things, whether a shade be more agreeable at morning, or evening, or noon-day?

*Lys.* Doubtless at noon-day.

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* And what disposeth men to rest?

*Lys.* Exercise.

*Euph.* When do men make the greatest fires?

*Lys.* In the coldest weather.

*Euph.* And what creates a love for icy liquors?

*Lys.* Excessive heat.

*Euph.* What if you raise a pendulum to a great height on one side?

*Lys.* It will, when left to itself, ascend so much the higher on the other.

*Euph.* It should seem, therefore, that darkness ensues from light, rest from motion, heat from cold, and in general that one extreme is the consequence of another?

*Lys.* It should seem so.

*Euph.* And doth not this observation hold in the civil as well as natural world? Doth not power produce licence, and licence power? Do not whigs make tories, and tories whigs. Bigots make atheists, and atheists bigots?

*Lys.* Granting this to be true.

*Euph.* Will it not hence follow that as we abhor slavish principles we should avoid running into licentious ones? I am and always was a sincere lover of liberty, legal English liberty; which I esteem a chief blessing, ornament, and comfort of life, and the great prerogative of an Englishman. But is it not to be feared that, upon the nation's running into a licentiousness which hath never been endured in any civilised country, men feeling the intolerable evils of one extreme may naturally fall into the other? You must allow the bulk of mankind are not philosophers, like you and Alciphron.

*Lys.* This I readily acknowledge.

*Euph.* I have another scruple about the tendency of your opinions. Suppose you should prevail, and destroy this protestant church and clergy: how could you come at the popish? I am credibly informed there is a great number of emissaries of the church of Rome disguised in England: who can tell what harvest a clergy so numerous, so subtle, and so well furnished with arguments to work on vulgar and uneducated minds, may be able to make in a country despoiled of all religion, and feeling the want of it? Who can tell whether the spirit of free-thinking ending with the opposition, and the vanity with the distinction, when the whole



Digitized by Google

nation are alike infidels; who can tell, I say, whether in such a juncture the men of genius themselves may not affect a new distinction, and be the first converts to popery?

*Lys.* And suppose they should. Between friends it would be no great matter. These are our maxims. In the first place, we hold it would be best to have no religion at all. Secondly, we hold that all religions are indifferent. If, therefore, upon trial, we find the country cannot do without a religion, why not popery as well as another? I know several ingenious men of our sect, who, if we had a popish prince on the throne, would turn papists to-morrow. This is a paradox, but I shall explain it. A prince whom we compliment with our religion, to be sure must be grateful.

*Euph.* I understand you. But what becomes of free-thinking all the while?

*Lys.* Oh! we should have more than ever of that, for we should keep it all to ourselves. As for the amusement of retailing it, the want of this would be largely compensated by solid advantages of another kind.

*Euph.* It seems then, by this account, the tendency you observed in the nation towards something great and new proves a tendency towards popery and slavery.

*Lys.* Mistake us not, good Euphranor. The thing first in our intention is consummate liberty: but, if this will not do, and there must after all be such things tolerated as religion and government, we are wisely willing to make the best of both.

*Cri.* This puts me in mind of a thought I have often had, that minute philosophers are dupes of the Jesuits. The two most avowed, professed, busy, propagators of infidelity, in all companies, and upon all occasions, that I ever met with, were both bigoted papists; and, being both men of considerable estates, suffered considerably on that score; which it is wonderful their thinking disciples should never reflect upon. Hegemon, a most distinguished writer among the minute philosophers, and hero of the sect, I am well assured, was once a papist, and never heard that he professed any other religion. I know that many of the church of Rome abroad are pleased with the growth of infidelity among us, as hoping it may make way for them. The emissaries of Rome are known to have personated several other sects, which from time to time have sprung up amongst us; and

Digitized by Google

why not this of the minute philosophers, of all others the best calculated to ruin both church and state? I myself have known a Jesuit abroad talk among English gentlemen like a free-thinker. I am credibly informed that Jesuits, known to be such by the minute philosophers at home, are admitted into their clubs, and I have observed them to approve, and speak better of the Jesuits than of any other clergy whatsoever. Those who are not acquainted with the subtle spirit, the refined politics, and wonderful economy, of that renowned society, need only read the account given of them by the Jesuit Inchofer, in his book *De Monarchiâ Solipsorum;* and those who are will not be surprised they should be able to make dupes of our minute philosophers: dupes, I say, for I can never think they suspect they are only tools to serve the ends of cunninger men than themselves. They seem to me drunk and giddy with a false notion of liberty, and spurred on by this principle to make mad experiments on their country; they agree only in pulling down all that stands in their way; without any concerted scheme, and without caring or knowing what to erect in its stead. To hear them, as I have often done, descant on the moral virtues, resolve them into shame, then laugh at shame as a weakness, admire the unconfined lives of savages, despise all order and decency of education—one would think the intention of these philosophers was, when they had pruned and weeded the notions of their fellow-subjects, and divested them of their prejudices, to strip them of their clothes, and fill the country with naked followers of nature, enjoying all the privileges of brutality.

Here Crito made a pause, and fixed his eyes on Alciphron, who during this whole conversation had sat thoughtful and attentive, without saying a word; and with an air, one while dissatisfied at what Lysicles advanced, another serene and pleased, seeming to approve some better thought of his own. But the day being now far spent, Alciphron proposed to adjourn the argument till the following; when, said he, I shall set matters on a new foundation, and in so full and clear a light, as, I doubt not, will give entire satisfaction. So we changed the discourse, and after a repast upon cold provisions, took a walk on the strand, and in the cool of the evening returned to Crito's.

Digitized by Google

# THE THIRD DIALOGUE.[1]

1. Alciphron's account of honour. 2. Character and conduct of men of honour. 3. Sense of moral beauty. 4. The honestum or τὸ καλὸν of the ancients. 5. Taste for moral beauty, whether a sure guide or rule. 6. Minute philosophers ravished with the abstract beauty of virtue. 7. Their virtue alone disinterested and heroic. 8. Beauty of sensible objects, what, and how perceived. 9. The idea of beauty explained by painting and architecture. 10. Beauty of the moral system, wherein it consists. 11. It supposeth a Providence. 12. Influence of τὸ καλὸν and τὸ πρέπον. 13. Enthusiasm of Cratylus compared with the sentiments of Aristotle. 14. Compared with the Stoical principles. 15. Minute philosophers, their talent for raillery and ridicule. 16. The wisdom of those who make virtue alone its own reward.

1.

THE following day, as we sat round the tea-table, in a summer parlour which looks into the garden, Alciphron after the first dish turned down his cup, and, reclining back on his chair, proceeded as follows. Above all the sects upon earth, it is the peculiar privilege of ours, not to be tied down by any principles. While other philosophers profess a servile adherence to certain tenets, ours assert a noble freedom, differing not only one from another, but very often the same

[1] This Dialogue is directed against the æsthetic morality of Shaftesbury (1671-1713), as set forth in the three volumes of various pieces (1708, etc.) known collectively as the "Characteristics, or Opinions of Men and Manners" (1711). His teaching, so far as it is referred to in this dialogue, may be summed up briefly as follows: Nature is beautiful and harmonious: the contemplation of this "harmony" fosters a sense of beauty; this sense of beauty is also capable of perceiving moral excellence, and so becomes a "moral sense": this moral sense is the sole necessary test of right and wrong, all supernatural additions being amusing encouragements for those lacking the complete culture of the "virtuoso"; the sure test of the worth of an opinion is its capability of surviving ridicule. Shaftesbury's pantheism, his bland ignoring of the existence of evil, his attitude towards life generally, and above all the ponderous gambols of his literary manner—these laid him open to attack

Digitized by Google

man from himself. Which method of proceeding, beside other advantages, hath this annexed to it, that we are of all men the hardest to confute. You may, perhaps, confute a particular tenet, but then this affects only him who maintains it, and so long only as he maintains it. Some of our sect dogmatize more than others, and in some more than other points. The doctrine of the usefulness of vice is a point wherein we are not all agreed. Some of us are great admirers of virtue. With others the points of vice and virtue are problematical. For my part, though I think the doctrine maintained yesterday by Lysicles an ingenious speculation; yet upon the whole, there are divers reasons which incline me to depart from it, and rather to espouse the virtuous side of the question; with the smallest, perhaps, but the most contemplative and laudable part of our sect. It seemeth, I say, after a nice inquiry and balancing on both sides, that we ought to prefer virtue to vice; and that such preference would contribute both to the public weal, and the reputation of our philosophers.

You are to know then, we have among us several that, without one grain of religion, are men of the nicest honour, and therefore men of virtue because men of honour. Honour is a noble unpolluted source of virtue, without the least mixture of fear, interest, or superstition. It hath all the advantages without the evils which attend religion. It is the mark of a great and fine soul, and is to be found among

from very opposite quarters. Men so different as Berkeley and Mandeville arrayed themselves against him, Mandeville with a characteristic coarseness and Berkeley with a most unusual vehemence and bitterness. Berkeley warns us in the Preface that the characters of the dialogues have to represent many varieties of atheist; and we may safely assume that the most offensive and ridiculous parts of the character of Alciphron present us with a picture of Shaftesbury as he appeared to Berkeley. After all the most one can urge against the "Divine Characterizer" is that he is pretentious, discursive, and deplorably awkward when he tries to be delicately playful; and one feels that Berkeley has treated him somewhat unfairly. Of the many influenced by Shaftesbury, the most important in the history of thought is Francis Hutcheson (1694-1747), whose "Ideas of Beauty and Virtue" (1725), "Passions and Affections" (1728), are both a compression and more complete application of Shaftesbury's ideas; but the most considerable and the most familiar is Pope, whose "Essay on Man" contains many crystals of Shaftesbury. —ED.

Digitized by Google

persons of rank and breeding. It affects the court, the senate, and the camp, and in general every rendezvous of people of fashion.

*Euph.* You say then that honour is the source of virtue?

*Alc.* I do.

*Euph.* Can a thing be the source of itself?

*Alc.* It cannot.

*Euph.* The source, therefore, is distinguished from that of which it is the source?

*Alc.* Doubtless.

*Euph.* Honour then is one thing, and virtue another?

*Alc.* I grant it. Virtuous actions are the effect, and honour is the source or cause of that effect.

*Euph.* Tell me. Is honour the will producing those actions, or the final cause for which they are produced; or right reason which is their rule and limit, or the object about which they are conversant? Or do you by the word *honour* understand a faculty or appetite? all which are supposed, in one sense or other, to be the source of human actions.

*Alc.* Nothing of all this.

*Euph.* Be pleased then to give me some notion or definition of it.

Alciphron, having mused a while, answered, that he defined honour to be a principle of virtuous actions.

To which Euphranor replied: If I understand it rightly, the word *principle* is variously taken. Sometimes by principles we mean the parts of which a whole is composed, and into which it may be resolved. Thus the elements are said to be principles of compound bodies. And thus words, syllables, and letters are the principles of speech. Sometimes by principle we mean a small particular seed, the growth or gradual unfolding of which doth produce an organized body, animal or vegetable, in its proper size and shape. Principles at other times are supposed to be certain fundamental theorems in arts and sciences, in religion and politics. Let me know in which of these senses, or whether it be in some other sense, that you understand this word, when you say, Honour is a principle of virtue.

To this Alciphron replied, that for his part he meant it in none of those senses, but defined honour to be a certain ardour or enthusiasm that glowed in the breast of a gallant man.

Digitized by Google

Upon this, Euphranor observed, it was always admitted to put the definition in place of the thing defined. Is this allowed, said he, or not?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* May we not therefore say, that a man of honour is a warm man, or an enthusiast?

Alciphron, hearing this, declared that such exactness was to no purpose; that pedants, indeed, may dispute and define, but could never reach that high sense of honour which distinguished the fine gentleman, and was a thing rather to be felt than explained.

2. Crito, perceiving that Alciphron could not bear being pressed any farther on that article, and willing to give some satisfaction to Euphranor, said that of himself indeed he should not undertake to explain so nice a point, but he would retail to them part of a conversation he once heard between *Nicander* a minute philosopher and *Menecles* a Christian, upon the same subject, which was for substance as follows.

*M.* From what principle are you gentlemen virtuous?

*N.* From honour. We are men of honour.

*M.* May not a man of honour debauch another's wife, or get drunk, or sell a vote, or refuse to pay his debts, without lessening or tainting his honour?

*N.* He may have the vices and faults of a gentleman: but is obliged to pay debts of honour, that is, all such as are contracted by play.

*M.* Is not your man of honour always ready to resent affronts and engage in duels?

*N.* He is ready to demand and give gentleman's satisfaction upon all proper occasions.

*M.* It should seem, by this account, that to ruin tradesmen, break faith to one's own wife, corrupt another man's, take bribes, cheat the public, cut a man's throat for a word, are all points consistent with your principle of honour.

*N.* It cannot be denied that we are men of gallantry, men of fire, men who know the world, and all that.

*M.* It seems therefore that honour among infidels is like honesty among pirates; something confined to

Digitized by Google

themselves, and which the fraternity perhaps may find their account in, but every one else should be constantly on his guard against.

By this dialogue, continued Crito, a man who lives out of the *grand monde* may be enabled to form some notion of what the world calls honour, and men of honour.

*Euph.* I must entreat you not to put me off with Nicander's opinion, whom I know nothing of, but rather give me your own judgment, drawn from your own observation upon men of honour.

*Cri.* If I must pronounce, I can very sincerely assure you that, by all I have heard or seen, I could never find that honour, considered as a principle distinct from conscience, religion, reason, and virtue, was more than an empty name. And I do verily believe that those who build upon that notion have less virtue than other men; and that what they have, or seem to have, is owing to fashion (being of the reputable kind), if not to a conscience early imbued with religious principles, and afterwards retaining a tincture from them without knowing it. These two principles seem to account for all that looks like virtue in those gentlemen. Your men of fashion, in whom animal life abounds, a sort of bullies in morality, who disdain to have it thought they are afraid of conscience; these descant much upon honour, and affect to be called men of honour, rather than conscientious or honest men. But, by all that I could ever observe, this specious character, where there is nothing of conscience or religion underneath, to give it life and substance, is no better than a meteor or painted cloud.

*Euph.* I had a confused notion that honour was something connected with truth; and that men of honour were the greatest enemies to all hypocrisy, fallacy, and disguise.

*Cri.* So far from that, an infidel, who sets up for the nicest honour, shall, without the least grain of faith or religion, pretend himself a Christian, take any test, join in any act of worship, kneel, pray, receive the sacrament, to serve an interest. The same person, without any impeachment of his honour, shall most solemnly declare and promise, in the face of God and the world, that he will love his wife, and forsaking all others keep only to her, when at the same time it is certain he intends never to perform one tittle of his vow;

Digitized by Google

and convinceth the whole world of this as soon as he gets her in his power, and her fortune, for the sake of which this man of untainted honour makes no scruple to cheat and lie.

*Euph.* We had a notion here in the country that it was of all things most odious, and a matter of much risk and peril, to give the lie to a man of honour.

*Cri.* It is very true. He abhors to take the lie, but not to tell it.

3. Alciphron, having heard all this with great composure of mind and countenance, spake as follows:—The word Free-thinker, as it comprehends men of very different sorts and sentiments, cannot, in a strict sense, be said to constitute one particular sect, holding a certain system of positive and distinct opinions. Though it must be owned we do all agree in certain points of unbelief, or negative principles, which agreement, in some sense, unites us under the common idea of one sect. But then, those negative principles, as they happen to take root in men of different age, temper, and education, do produce various tendencies, opinions, and characters, widely differing one from another.[1] You are not to think that our greatest strength lies in our greatest number —libertines, and mere men of honour. No: we have among us philosophers of a very different character, men of curious contemplation, not governed by such gross things as sense and custom, but of an abstracted virtue and sublime morals: and the less religious the more virtuous. For virtue of the high and disinterested kind no man is so well qualified as an infidel; it being a mean and selfish thing to be virtuous through fear or hope. The notion of a Providence, and future state of rewards and punishments, may indeed tempt or scare men of abject spirit into practices contrary to the natural bent of their souls, but will never produce a true and genuine virtue. To go to the bottom of things, to analyse virtue into its first principles, and fix a scheme of duty on its true basis, you must understand that there is an Idea of Beauty natural to the mind of man. This all men desire, this they are pleased and delighted with for its own sake, purely from an instinct of nature. A man needs no arguments to make him

[1] The speech of *Alciphron* from its beginning to this point (11 lines) was added to the third edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

discern and approve what is beautiful; it strikes at first sight, and attracts without a reason. And as this beauty is found in the shape and form of corporeal things; so also is there analogous to it a beauty of another kind, an order, a symmetry, and comeliness, in the moral world. And as the eye perceiveth the one, so the mind doth, by a certain interior sense, perceive the other; which sense, talent, or faculty is ever quickest and purest in the noblest minds. Thus, as by sight I discern the beauty of a plant or an animal, even so the mind apprehends the moral excellence, the beauty, and decorum of justice and temperance. And as we readily pronounce a dress becoming, or an attitude graceful, we can, with the same free untutored judgment, at once declare whether this or that conduct or action be comely and beautiful. To relish this kind of beauty there must be a delicate and fine taste; but, where there is this natural taste, nothing further is wanting, either as a principle to convince, or as a motive to induce men to the love of virtue. And more or less there is of this taste or sense in every creature that hath reason. All rational beings are by nature social. They are drawn one towards another by natural affections. They unite and incorporate into families, clubs, parties, and commonwealths by mutual sympathy. As, by means of the sensitive soul, our several distinct parts and members do consent towards the animal functions, and are connected in one whole; even so, the several parts of these rational systems or bodies politic, by virtue of this moral or interior sense, are held together, have a fellow feeling, do succour and protect each other, and jointly co-operate towards the same end. Hence that joy in society, that propension towards doing good to our kind, that gratulation and delight in beholding the virtuous deeds of other men, or in reflecting on our own. By contemplation of the fitness and order of the parts of a moral system, regularly operating, and knit together by benevolent affections, the mind of man attaineth to the highest notion of beauty, excellence, and perfection. Seized and rapt with this sublime idea, our philosophers do infinitely despise and pity whoever shall propose or accept any other motive to virtue. Interest is a mean ungenerous thing, destroying the merit of virtue; and falsehood of every kind is inconsistent with the genuine spirit of philosophy.

Digitized by Google

*Cri.* The love therefore that you bear to moral beauty, and your passion for abstracted truth, will not suffer you to think with patience of those fraudulent impositions upon mankind, Providence, the Immortality of the Soul, and a future Retribution of rewards and punishments; which, under the notion of promoting, do, it seems, destroy all true virtue, and at the same time contradict and disparage your noble theories, manifestly tending to the perturbation and disquiet of men's minds, and filling them with fruitless hopes and vain terrors.

*Alc.* Men's first thoughts and natural notions are the best in moral matters. And there is no need that mankind should be preached, or reasoned, or frightened into virtue, a thing so natural and congenial to every human soul. Now, if this be the case, as it certainly is, it follows that all the ends of society are secured without Religion, and that an infidel bids fair to be the most virtuous man, in a true, sublime, and heroic sense.

4. *Euph.* O Alciphron, while you talk, I feel an affection in my soul like the trembling of one lute upon striking the unison strings of another. Doubtless there is a beauty of the mind, a charm in virtue, a symmetry and proportion in the moral world. This moral beauty was known to the ancients by the name of *honestum*, or τὸ καλὸν. And, in order to know its force and influence, it may not be amiss to inquire, what it was understood to be, and what light it was placed in, by those who first considered it, and gave it a name. Τὸ καλὸν, according to Aristotle, is the ἐπαινετὸν or *laudable;* according to Plato, it is the ἡδὺ or ὠφέλιμον, *pleasant* or *profitable*, which is meant with respect to a reasonable mind and its true interest. Now, I would fain know whether a mind which considers an action as laudable be not carried beyond the bare action itself, to regard the opinion of others concerning it?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* And whether this be a sufficient ground or principle of virtue, for a man to act upon, when he thinks himself removed from the eye and observation of every other intelligent being?

*Alc.* It seems not.

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* Again: I ask whether a man who doth a thing pleasant or profitable, as such, must not be supposed to forbear doing it, or even to do the contrary, upon the prospect of greater pleasure or profit?

*Alc.* He must.

*Euph.* Doth it not follow from hence that the beauty of virtue, or τὸ καλὸν, in either Aristotle's or Plato's sense, is not a sufficient principle or ground to engage sensual and worldly-minded men in the practice of it?

*Alc.* What then?

*Euph.* Why then it will follow that hope of reward and fear of punishment are highly expedient to cast the balance of pleasant and profitable on the side of virtue, and thereby very much conduce to the benefit of human society.

Alciphron upon this appealed:—Gentlemen, said he, you are witnesses of this unfair proceeding of Euphranor, who argues against us from explications given by Plato and Aristotle of the beauty of virtue, which are things we have nothing to say to; the philosophers of our sect abstracting from all praise, pleasure, and interest, when they are enamoured and transported with that sublime idea.

I beg pardon, replied Euphranor, for supposing the minute philosophers of our days think like those ancient sages. But you must tell me, Alciphron, since you do not think fit to adopt the sense of Plato or Aristotle, what sense it is in which you understand the beauty of virtue. Define it, explain it, make me to understand your meaning, that so we may argue about the same thing, without which we can never come to a conclusion.

5. *Alc.* Some things are better understood by definitions and descriptions; but I have always observed that those who would define, explain, and dispute about this point make the least of it. Moral beauty is of so peculiar and abstracted a nature, something so subtle, fine, and fugacious, that it will not bear being handled and inspected, like every gross and common subject. You will, therefore, pardon me if I stand upon my philosophic liberty; and choose rather to intrench myself within the general and indefinite sense, rather than, by entering into a precise and particular explication of this beauty, perchance lose sight of it; or give you some hold

Digitized by Google

whereon to cavil, and infer, and raise doubts, queries, and difficulties about a point as clear as the sun, when nobody reasons upon it.

*Euph.* How say you, Alciphron, is that notion clearest when it is not considered?

*Alc.* I say it is rather to be felt than understood—a certain *je ne sais quoi.* An object, not of the discursive faculty, but of a peculiar sense, which is properly called the *moral sense,* being adapted to the perception of moral beauty, as the eye to colours, or the ear to sounds.

*Euph.* That men have certain instinctive sensations or passions from nature, which make them amiable and useful to each other, I am clearly convinced. Such are a fellow-feeling with the distressed, a tenderness for our offspring, an affection towards our friends, our neighbours, and our country, an indignation against things base, cruel, or unjust. These passions are implanted in the human soul, with several other fears and appetites, aversions and desires, some of which are strongest and uppermost in one mind, others in another. Should it not therefore seem a very uncertain guide in morals, for a man to follow his passion or inward feeling; and would not this rule infallibly lead different men different ways, according to the prevalency of this or that appetite or passion?

*Alc.* I do not deny it.

*Euph.* And will it not follow from hence that duty and virtue are in a fairer way of being practised, if men are led by reason and judgment, balancing low and sensual pleasures with those of a higher kind, comparing present losses with future gains, and the uneasiness and disgust of every vice with the delightful practice of the opposite virtue, and the pleasing reflexions and hopes which attend it? Or can there be a stronger motive to virtue than the shewing that, considered in all lights, it is every man's true interest?

6. *Alc.* I tell you, Euphranor, we contemn the virtue of that man who computes and deliberates, and must have a reason for being virtuous. The refined moralists of our sect are ravished and transported with the abstract beauty of virtue. They disdain all forensical motives to it; and love virtue only for virtue's sake. Oh rapture! oh enthu-

Digitized by Google

siasm! oh the quintessence of beauty! methinks I could dwell for ever on this contemplation: but, rather than entertain myself, I must endeavour to convince you. Make an experiment on the first man you meet. Propose a villainous or unjust action. Take his first sense of the matter, and you shall find he detests it. He may, indeed, be afterwards misled by arguments, or overpowered by temptation; but his original, unpremeditated, and genuine thoughts are just and orthodox. How can we account for this but by a moral sense, which, left to itself, hath as quick and true a perception of the beauty and deformity of human actions as the eye hath of colours?

*Euph.* May not this be sufficiently accounted for by conscience, affection, passion, education, reason, custom, religion; which principles and habits, for aught I know, may be what you metaphorically call a moral sense?

*Alc.* What I call a moral sense is strictly, properly, and truly such, and in kind different from all those things you enumerate. It is what all men have, though all may not observe it.

Upon this Euphranor smiled and said, Alciphron has made discoveries where I least expected it. For, said he, in regard to every other point I should hope to learn from him; but for the knowledge of myself, or the faculties and powers of my own mind, I should have looked at home. And there I might have looked long enough without finding this new talent, which even now, after being tutored, I cannot comprehend. For Alciphron, I must needs say, is too sublime and enigmatical upon a point which of all others ought to be most clearly understood. I have often heard that your deepest adepts and oldest professors in science are the obscurest. Lysicles is young, and speaks plain. Would he but favour us with his sense of this point, it might perhaps prove more upon a level with my apprehension.

7. Lysicles shook his head, and in a grave and earnest manner addressed the company. Gentlemen, said he, Alciphron stands upon his own legs. I have no part in these refined notions he is at present engaged to defend. If I must subdue my passions, abstract, contemplate, be enamoured of virtue; in a word, if I must be an enthusiast, I owe so

Digitized by Google

much deference to the laws of my country as to choose being an enthusiast in their way. Besides, it is better being so for some end than for none. This doctrine hath all the solid inconveniences, without the amusing hopes and prospects, of the Christian.

*Alc.* I never counted on Lysicles for my second in this point; which after all doth not need his assistance or explication. All subjects ought not to be treated in the same manner. The way of definition and division is dry and pedantic. Besides, the subject is sometimes too obscure, sometimes too simple for this method. One while we know too little of a point, another too much, to make it plainer by discourse.

*Cri.* To hear Alciphron talk puts me in mind of that ingenious Greek who, having wrapped a man's brother up in a cloak, asked him whether he knew that person; being ready, either by keeping on or pulling off the cloak, to confute his answer, whatever it should be. For my part, I believe, if matters were fairly stated, that rational satisfaction, that peace of mind, that inward comfort, and conscientious joy, which a good Christian finds in good actions, would not be found to fall short of all the ecstasy, rapture, and enthusiasm supposed to be the effect of that high and undescribed principle. In earnest, can any ecstasy be higher, any rapture more affecting, than that which springs from the love of God and man, from a conscience void of offence, and an inward discharge of duty, with the secret delight, trust, and hope that attend it?

*Alc.* O Euphranor, we votaries of truth do not envy but pity the groundless joys and mistaken hopes of a Christian. And, as for conscience and rational pleasure, how can we allow a conscience without allowing a vindictive Providence? Or how can we suppose the charm of virtue consists in any pleasure or benefit attending virtuous actions,[1] without giving great advantages to the Christian religion, which, it seems, excites its believers to virtue by the highest interests and pleasures in reversion. Alas! should we grant this, there

[1] There can never be less self-enjoyment than in these supposed wise characters, these selfish computers of happiness and private good. "Characteristics," vol. iii., p. 301. (Note added to edition of 1752. The first six editions of the "Characteristics" are paged alike.—ED.)

Digitized by Google

would be a door opened to all those rusty declaimers upon the necessity and usefulness of the great points of Faith, the immortality of the soul, a future state, rewards and punishments, and the like exploded conceits; which, according to our system and principles, may perhaps produce a low, popular, interested kind of virtue, but must absolutely destroy and extinguish it in the sublime and heroic sense.

8. *Euph.* What you now say is very intelligible: I wish I understood your main principle as well.

*Alc.* And are you then in earnest at a loss? Is it possible you should have no notion of beauty, or that having it you should not know it to be amiable—amiable, I say, in itself, and for itself?

*Euph.* Pray tell me, Alciphron, are all mankind agreed in the notion of a beauteous face?

*Alc.* Beauty in human-kind seems to be of a mixed and various nature; forasmuch as the passions, sentiments, and qualities of the soul, being seen through and blending with the features, work differently on different minds, as the sympathy is more or less. But with regard to other things is there no steady principle of beauty? Is there upon earth a human mind without the idea of order, harmony, and proportion?

*Euph.* O Alciphron, it is my weakness that I am apt to be lost and bewildered in abstractions and generalities, but a particular thing is better suited to my faculties. I find it easy to consider and keep in view the objects of sense: let us therefore try to discover what their beauty is, or wherein it consists; and so, by the help of these sensible things, as a scale or ladder, ascend to moral and intellectual beauty. Be pleased then to inform me, what is it we call beauty in the objects of sense?

*Alc.* Every one knows beauty is that which pleases.

*Euph.* There is then beauty in the smell of a rose, or the taste of an apple?

*Alc.* By no means. Beauty is, to speak properly, perceived only by the eye.

*Euph.* It cannot therefore be defined in general that which pleaseth?

*Alc.* I grant it cannot.

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* How then shall we limit or define it?

Alciphron, after a short pause, said that beauty consisted in a certain symmetry or proportion pleasing to the eye.

*Euph.* Is this proportion one and the same in all things, or is it different in different kinds of things?

*Alc.* Different, doubtless. The proportions of an ox would not be beautiful in a horse. And we may observe also in things inanimate, that the beauty of a table, a chair, a door, consists in different proportions.

*Euph.* Doth not this proportion imply the relation of one thing to another?

*Alc.* It doth.

*Euph.* And are not these relations founded in size and shape?

*Alc.* They are.

*Euph.* And, to make the proportions just, must not those mutual relations of size and shape in the parts be such as shall make the whole complete and perfect in its kind?

*Alc.* I grant they must.

*Euph.* Is not a thing said to be perfect in its kind when it answers the end for which it was made?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* The parts, therefore, in true proportions must be so related, and adjusted to one another, as that they may best conspire to the use and operation of the whole?

*Alc.* It seems so.

*Euph.* But the comparing parts one with another, the considering them as belonging to one whole, and referring this whole to its use or end, should seem the work of *reason:* should it not?

*Alc.* It should.

*Euph.* Proportions, therefore, are not, strictly speaking, perceived by the sense of sight, but only by reason through the means of sight.

*Alc.* This I grant.

*Euph.* Consequently beauty, in your sense of it, is an object, not of the eye, but of the mind.

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* The eye, therefore, alone cannot ee that a chair is handsome, or a door well proportioned.



Digitized by Google

*Alc.* It seems to follow; but I am not clear as to this point.

*Euph.* Let us see if there be any difficulty in it. Could the chair you sit on, think you, be reckoned well proportioned or handsome, if it had not such a height, breadth, wideness, and was not so far reclined as to afford a convenient seat?

*Alc.* It could not.

*Euph.* The beauty, therefore, or symmetry of a chair cannot be apprehended but by knowing its use, and comparing its figure with that use; which cannot be done by the eye alone, but is the effect of judgment. It is, therefore, one thing to *see* an object, and another to *discern its beauty*.

*Alc.* I admit this to be true.

9. *Euph.* The architects judge a door to be of a beautiful proportion, when its height is double of the breadth. But if you should invert a well-proportioned door, making its breadth become the height, and its height the breadth, the figure would still be the same, but without that beauty in one situation which it had in another. What can be the cause of this, but that, in the forementioned supposition, the door would not yield convenient entrances to creatures of a human figure? But, if in any other part of the universe there should be supposed rational animals of an inverted stature, they must be supposed to invert the rule for proportion of doors; and to them that would appear beautiful which to us was disagreeable.

*Alc.* Against this I have no objection.

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, is there not something truly decent and beautiful in dress?

*Alc.* Doubtless, there is.

*Euph.* Are any likelier to give us an idea of this beauty in dress than painters and sculptors, whose proper business and study it is to aim at graceful representations?

*Alc.* I believe not.

*Euph.* Let us then examine the draperies of the great masters in these arts: how, for instance, they use to clothe a matron, or a man of rank. Cast an eye on those figures (said he, pointing to some prints after Raphael and Guido, that hung upon the wall): what appearance do you think an

Digitized by Google

English courtier or magistrate, with his Gothic, succinct, plaited garment, and his full-bottomed wig; or one of our ladies in her unnatural dress, pinched and stiffened and enlarged, with hoops and whale-bone and buckram, must make, among those figures so decently clad in draperies that fall into such a variety of natural, easy, and ample folds, that appear with so much dignity and simplicity, that cover the body without encumbering it, and adorn without altering the shape?

*Alc.* Truly I think they must make a very ridiculous appearance.

*Euph.* And what do you think this proceeds from? Whence is it that the Eastern nations, the Greeks, and the Romans, naturally ran into the most becoming dresses; while our Gothic gentry, after so many centuries racking their inventions, mending, and altering, and improving, and whirling about in a perpetual rotation of fashions, have never yet had the luck to stumble on any that was not absurd and ridiculous? Is it not from hence that, instead of consulting use, reason, and convenience, they abandon themselves to irregular fancy, the unnatural parent of monsters? Whereas the ancients, considering the use and end of dress, made it subservient to the freedom, ease, and convenience of the body; and, having no notion of mending or changing the natural shape, they aimed only at shewing it with decency and advantage. And, if this be so, are we not to conclude that the beauty of dress depends on its subserviency to certain ends and uses?

*Alc.* This appears to be true.

*Euph.* This subordinate relative nature of beauty, perhaps, will be yet plainer, if we examine the respective beauties of a horse and a pillar. Virgil's description of the former is—

> Illi ardua cervix,
> Argutumque caput, brevis alvus, obesaque terga,
> Luxuriatque toris animosum pectus.

Now, I would fain know whether the perfections and uses of a horse may not be reduced to these three points, courage, strength, and speed; and whether each of the beauties enumerated doth not occasion or betoken one of these perfections? After the same manner, if we inquire into the

Digitized by Google

parts and proportions of a beautiful pillar, we shall perhaps find them answer to the same idea. Those who have considered the theory of architecture tell us,[1] the proportions of the three Grecian orders were taken from the human body, as the most beautiful and perfect production of nature. Hence were derived those graceful ideas of columns, which had a character of strength without clumsiness, or of delicacy without weakness. Those beautiful proportions were, I say, taken originally from nature, which, in her creatures, as hath been already observed, referreth them to some end, use, or design. The *gonfiezza* also, or swelling, and the diminution of a pillar, is it not in such proportion as to make it appear strong and light at the same time? In the same manner, must not the whole entablature, with its projections, be so proportioned, as to seem great but not heavy, light but not little; inasmuch as a deviation into either extreme would thwart that reason and use of things wherein their beauty is founded, and to which it is subordinate? The entablature, and all its parts and ornaments, architrave, frieze, cornice, triglyphs, metopes, modiglions, and the rest, have each a use or appearance of use, in giving firmness and union to the building, in protecting it from the weather and casting off the rain in representing the ends of beams with their intervals, the production of rafters, and so forth. And if we consider the graceful angles in frontispieces, the spaces between the columns, or the ornaments of their capitals, shall we not find, that their beauty riseth from the appearance of use, or the imitation of natural things, whose beauty is originally founded on the same principle? which is, indeed, the grand distinction between Grecian and Gothic architecture; the latter being fantastical, and for the most part founded neither in nature nor in reason, in necessity nor use, the appearance of which accounts for all the beauty, grace, and ornament of the other.

*Cri.* What Euphranor hath said confirms the opinion I always entertained, that the rules of architecture were founded, as all other arts which flourished among the Greeks, in truth, and nature, and good sense. But the ancients, who, from a thorough consideration of the grounds and principles of art,

[1] See the learned Patriarch of Aquileia's "Commentary on Vitruvius," lib. iv., cap. 1.

Digitized by Google

formed their idea of beauty, did not always confine themselves strictly to the same rules and proportions; but, whenever the particular distance, position, elevation, or dimension of the fabric or its parts seemed to require it, made no scruple to depart from them, without deserting the original principles of beauty, which governed whatever deviations they made. This latitude or licence might not, perhaps, be safely trusted with most modern architects, who in their bold sallies seem to act without aim or design; and to be governed by no idea, no reason, or principle of art, but pure caprice, joined with a thorough contempt of that noble simplicity of the ancients, without which there can be no unity, gracefulness, or grandeur in their works; which of consequence must serve only to disfigure and dishonour the nation, being so many monuments to future ages of the opulence and ill taste of the present; which, it is to be feared, would succeed as wretchedly, and make as mad work in other affairs, were men to follow, instead of rules, precepts, and morals, their own taste and first thoughts of beauty.

*Alc.* I should now, methinks, be glad to see a little more distinctly the use and tendency of this digression upon architecture.

*Euph.* Was not beauty the very thing we inquired after?

*Alc.* It was.

*Euph.* What think you, Alciphron, can the appearance of a thing please at this time, and in this place, which pleased two thousand years ago, and two thousand miles off, without some real principle of beauty?

*Alc.* It cannot.

*Euph.* And is not this the case with respect to a just piece of architecture.

*Alc.* Nobody denies it.

*Euph.* Architecture, the noble offspring of judgment and fancy, was gradually formed in the most polite and knowing countries of Asia, Egypt, Greece, and Italy. It was cherished and esteemed by the most flourishing states and most renowned princes, who with vast expense improved and brought it to perfection. It seems, above all other arts, peculiarly conversant about order, proportion, and symmetry. May it not therefore be supposed, on all accounts, most likely to help us to some rational notion of the *je ne sais quoi* in beauty?

Digitized by Google

And, in effect, have we not learned from this digression that, as there is no beauty without proportion, so proportions are to be esteemed just and true, only as they are relative to some certain use or end, their aptitude and subordination to which end is, at bottom, that which makes them please and charm?

*Alc.* I admit all this to be true.

10. *Euph.* According to this doctrine, I would fain know what beauty can be found in a moral system, formed, connected, and governed by chance, fate, or any other blind unthinking principle? Forasmuch as without thought there can be no end or design; and without an end there can be no use; and without use there is no aptitude or fitness of proportion, from whence beauty springs.

*Alc.* May we not suppose a certain vital principle of beauty, order, and harmony, diffused throughout the world, without supposing a Providence inspecting, punishing, and rewarding the moral actions of men; without supposing the immortality of the soul, or a life to come; in a word, without admitting any part of what is commonly called Faith, Worship, and Religion?

*Cri.* Either you suppose this principle intelligent, or not intelligent: if the latter, it is all one with chance or fate, which was just now argued against: if the former, let me entreat Alciphron to explain to me wherein consists the beauty of a moral system, with a supreme Intelligence at the head of it which neither protects the innocent, punishes the wicked, nor rewards the virtuous. To suppose indeed a society of rational agents, acting under the eye of Providence, concurring in one design to promote the common benefit of the whole, and conforming their actions to the established laws and order of the Divine parental wisdom: wherein each particular agent shall not consider himself apart, but as the member of a great City, whose author and founder is God: in which the civil laws are no other than the rules of virtue and the duties of religion: and where every one's true interest is combined with his duty: to suppose this would be delightful: on this supposition a man need be no Stoic or knight-errant, to account for his virtue. In such a system, vice is madness, cunning is folly, wisdom and virtue are the

Digitized by Google

same thing; where, notwithstanding all the crooked paths and by-roads, the wayward appetites and inclinations of men, sovereign reason is sure to reform whatever seems amiss, to reduce that which is devious, make straight that which is crooked, and, in the last act, wind up the whole plot according to the exactest rules of wisdom and justice. In such a system or society, governed by the wisest precepts, enforced by the highest rewards and discouragements, it is delightful to consider how the regulation of laws, the distribution of good and evil, the aim of moral agents, do all conspire in due subordination to promote the noblest end, to wit, the complete happiness or well-being of the whole. In contemplating the beauty of such a moral system, we may cry out with the Psalmist, "Very excellent things are spoken of thee, thou City of God."

11. In a system of spirits, subordinate to the will, and under the direction of the Father of spirits, governing them by laws, and conducting them by methods suitable to wise and good ends, there will be great beauty. But in an incoherent fortuitous system, governed by chance, or in a blind system, governed by fate, or in any system where Providence doth not preside, how can beauty be, which cannot be without order, which cannot be without design? When a man is conscious that his will is inwardly conformed to the Divine will, producing order and harmony in the universe, and conducting the whole by the justest methods to the best end: this gives a beautiful idea. But, on the other hand, a consciousness of virtue overlooked, neglected, distressed by men, and not regarded or rewarded by God, ill-used in this world, without hope or prospect of being better used in another, I would fain know where is the pleasure of this reflexion, where is the beauty of this scene? Or, how could any man in his senses think the spreading such notions the way to spread or propagate virtue in the world? Is it not, I beseech you, an ugly system in which you can suppose no law and prove no duty, wherein men thrive by wickedness and suffer by virtue? Would it not be a disagreeable sight to see an honest man peeled by sharpers, to see virtuous men injured and despised while vice triumphed? An enthusiast may entertain himself with visions and fine talk

Digitized by Google

about such a system; but when it comes to be considered by men of cool heads and close reason, I believe they will find no beauty nor perfection in it; nor will it appear that such a moral system can possibly come from the same hand, or be of a piece with the natural, throughout which there shine so much order, harmony, and proportion.

*Alc.* Your discourse serves to confirm me in my opinion. You may remember, I declared that touching this beauty of morality in the high sense, a man's first thoughts are the best; and that, if we pretend to examine, inspect, and reason, we are in danger to lose sight of it.[1] That in fact there is such a thing cannot be doubted, when we consider that in these days some of our philosophers have a high sense of virtue, without the least notion of religion, a clear proof of the usefulness and efficacy of our principles!

12. *Cri.* Not to dispute the virtue of minute philosophers, we may venture to call its cause in question, and make a doubt whether it be an inexplicable enthusiastic notion of moral beauty, or rather, as to me it seems, what was already assigned by Euphranor, complexion, custom, and religious education? But, allowing what beauty you please to virtue in an irreligious system, it cannot be less in a religious, unless you will suppose that her charms diminish as her dowry increaseth. The truth is, a believer hath all the motives from the beauty of virtue in any sense whatsoever that an unbeliever can possibly have, besides other motives which an unbeliever hath not. Hence, it is plain those of your sect who have moral virtue owe it not to their peculiar tenets, which serve only to lessen the motives to virtue. Those, therefore, who are good are less good, and those who are bad are more bad, than they would have been were they believers.

*Euph.* To me it seems those heroic infidel inamoratos of abstracted beauty are much to be pitied, and much to be admired.

Lysicles hearing this, said with some impatience:—Gentlemen, you shall have my whole thoughts upon this point

[1] Men's first thoughts on moral matters are generally better than their second: their natural notions better than those refined by study, "Characteristics," vol. i., p. 13. (Note added to edition of 1752.—Ed.)

Digitized by Google

plain and frank. All that is said about a moral sense, or moral beauty, in any signification, either of Alciphron, or Euphranor, or any other, I take to be at bottom mere bubble and pretence. The *καλὸν* and the *πρέπον*, the *beautiful* and *decent*, are things outward, relative, and superficial, which have no effect in the dark, but are specious topics to discourse and expatiate upon, as some formal pretenders of our sect, though in other points very orthodox, are used to do. But should one of them get into power, you would find him no such fool as Euphranor imagines. He would soon shew he had found out that the love of one's country is a prejudice: that mankind are rogues and hypocrites, and that it were folly to sacrifice one's-self for the sake of such: that all regards centre in this life, and that, as this life is to every man his own life, it clearly follows that charity begins at home. Benevolence to mankind is perhaps pretended, but benevolence to himself is practised by the wise. The livelier sort of our philosophers do not scruple to own these maxims; and as for the graver, if they are true to their principles, one may guess what they must think at the bottom.

*Cri.* Whatever may be the effect of pure theory upon certain select spirits, of a peculiar make, or in some other parts of the world, I do verily think that in this country of ours, reason, religion, and law are all together little enough to subdue the outward to the inner man; and that it must argue a wrong head and weak judgment to suppose that without them men will be enamoured of the golden mean. To which my countrymen perhaps are less inclined than others, there being in the make of an English mind a certain gloom and eagerness, which carries to the sad extreme: religion to fanaticism; free-thinking to atheism; liberty to rebellion: nor should we venture to be governed by taste, even in matters of less consequence. The beautiful in dress, furniture, and building is, as Euphranor hath observed, something real and well grounded: and yet our English do not find it out of themselves. What wretched work do they and other northern people make when they follow their own taste of beauty in any of these particulars, instead of acquiring the true, which is to be got from ancient models and the principles of art, as in the case of virtue from great models and meditation, so far as natural means can go? But in no case

Digitized by Google

is it to be hoped that τὸ καλὸν will be the leading idea of the many, who have quick senses, strong passions, and gross intellects.

13. *Alc.* The fewer they are the more ought we to esteem and admire such philosophers, whose souls are touched and transported with this sublime idea.

*Cri.* But then one might expect from such philosophers so much good sense and philanthropy as to keep their tenets to themselves, and consider their weak brethren, who are more strongly affected by certain senses and notions of another kind than that of the beauty of pure disinterested virtue.

Cratylus, a man prejudiced against the Christian religion, of a crazy constitution, of a rank above most men's ambition, and a fortune equal to his rank, had little capacity for sensual vices, or temptation to dishonest ones. Cratylus, having talked himself, or imagined that he had talked himself, into a stoical enthusiasm about the beauty of virtue, did, under the pretence of making men heroically virtuous, endeavour to destroy the means of making them reasonably and humanly so: a clear instance that neither birth, nor books, nor conversation can introduce a knowledge of the world into a conceited mind, which will ever be its own object, and contemplate mankind in its own mirror!

*Alc.* Cratylus was a lover of liberty, and of his country, and had a mind to make men incorrupt and virtuous upon the purest and most disinterested principles.

*Cri.* It is true the main scope of all his writings (as he himself tells us) was to assert the reality of a beauty and charm in moral as well as in natural subjects; to demonstrate a taste which he thinks more effectual than principle; to recommend morals on the same foot with manners; and so to advance philosophy on the very foundation of what is called agreeable and polite.[1] As for religious qualms—the belief of a future state of rewards and punishments, and

[1] "It has been the main scope and principal end of these volumes, 'to assert the reality of a BEAUTY and CHARM in *moral* as well as *natural* subjects; and to demonstrate the reasonableness of a *proportionate* TASTE and *determinate* CHOICE, in *life* and *manners*.'" "Characteristics," vol. iii., p. 303.—ED.

Digitized by Google

such matters, this great man sticks not to declare that the liberal, polished, and refined part of mankind must needs consider them only as children's tales and amusements of the vulgar.[1] For the sake therefore of the better sort, he hath, in great goodness and wisdom, thought of something else, to wit, a *taste* or *relish*: this, he assures us, is at least what will influence; since, according to him, whoever has any impression of gentility (as he calls it) or politeness, is so acquainted with the decorum and grace of things as to be readily transported with the contemplation thereof.[2] His conduct seems just as wise as if a monarch should give out that there was neither jail nor executioner in his kingdom to enforce the laws, but that it would be beautiful to observe them, and that in so doing men would taste the pure delight which results from order and decorum.

*Alc.* After all, is it not true that certain ancient philosophers, of great note, held the same opinion with Cratylus, declaring that he did not come up to the character, or deserve the title of a good man, who practised virtue for the sake of anything but its own beauty?

*Cri.* I believe, indeed, that some of the ancients said such things as gave occasion for this opinion.

Aristotle[3] distinguisheth between two characters of a good man; the one he calleth ἀγαθὸς, or simply *good*: the other καλὸς κἀγαθὸς, from whence the compound term καλοκἀγαθία, which cannot, perhaps, be rendered by any one word in our language. But his sense is plainly this:—ἀγαθὸς he defineth to be, that man to whom the good things of nature are good: for, according to him, those things which are vulgarly esteemed the greatest goods, as riches, honours, power, and bodily perfections, are indeed good by nature, but they happen nevertheless to be hurtful and bad to some persons, upon the account of evil habits; inasmuch as neither a fool, nor

[1] "A *Devil* and a *Hell* may prevail, where a *Jail* and *Gallows* are thought insufficient. But such is the nature of the liberal, polished and refined part of mankind, . . . that they look on the pious narrations to be indeed no better than children's tales, or the amusement of the mere vulgar." "Characteristics," vol. iii., p. 177-178.—ED.

[2] See "Characteristics," vol. iii., Miscel. 5, cap. 3; and Miscel. 3, cap. 2. (The speech of *Crito* up to this point (18 lines) was added to the second edition.)

[3] "Ethic. ad Eudemum," lib. vii., cap. ult.

Digitized by Google

an unjust man, nor an intemperate, can be at all the better for the use of them, any more than a sick man for using the nourishment proper for those who are in health. But *καλὸς κἀγαθὸς* is that man in whom are to be found all things worthy and decent and laudable, purely as such and for their own sake, and who practiseth virtue from no other motive than the sole love of her own innate beauty. That philosopher observes likewise that there is a certain political habit, such as the Spartans and others had, who thought virtue was to be valued and practised on account of the natural advantages that attend it. For which reason, he adds, they are indeed good men, but they have not the *καλοκἀγαθία*, or supreme consummate virtue. From hence it is plain that, according to Aristotle, a man may be a good man without believing virtue its own reward, or being only moved to virtue by the sense of moral beauty. It is also plain that he distinguisheth the political virtues of nations, which the public is everywhere concerned to maintain, from this sublime and speculative kind.

It might also be observed that his exalted idea did consist with supposing a Providence which inspects and rewards the virtues of the best men. For, saith he, in another place[1]— If the gods have any care of human affairs, as it appears they have, it should seem reasonable to suppose they are most delighted with the most excellent nature, and most approaching their own, which is the mind, and that they will reward those who chiefly love and cultivate what is most dear to them. The same philosopher observes,[2] that the bulk of mankind are not naturally disposed to be awed by shame, but by fear; nor to abstain from vicious practices on account of their deformity, but only of the punishment which attends them. And again,[3] he tells us that youth, being of itself averse from abstinence and sobriety, should be under the restraint of laws regulating their education and employment, and that the same discipline should be continued even after they became men. For which, saith he, we want laws, and, in one word, for the whole ordering of life; inasmuch as the generality of mankind obey rather force than reason, and are

[1] "Ad Nicom.," lib. x., cap. 8.
[2] *Ibid.*, lib. x., cap. 10.
[3] *Ibid.*, lib. x., cap. 9.

Digitized by Google

influenced rather by penalties than the beauty of virtue (*ζημίαις ἢ τῷ καλῷ*).

From all which, it is very plain what Aristotle would have thought of those who should go about to lessen or destroy the hopes and fears of mankind, in order to make them virtuous on this sole principle of the beauty of virtue.

14. *Alc.* But, whatever the Stagirite and his Peripatetics might think, is it not certain that the Stoics maintained this doctrine in its highest sense, asserting the beauty of virtue to be all-sufficient, that virtue was her own reward, that this alone could make a man happy, in spite of all those things which are vulgarly esteemed the greatest woes and miseries of human life? And all this they held at the same time that they believed the soul of man to be of a corporeal nature, and in death dissipated like a flame or vapour.

*Cri.* It must be owned the Stoics sometimes talk as if they believed the mortality of the soul. Seneca, in a letter of his to Lucilius, speaks much like a minute philosopher in this particular. But, in several other places, he declares himself of a clear contrary opinion, affirming that the souls of men after death mount aloft into the heavens, look down upon earth, entertain themselves with the theory of celestial bodies, the course of nature, and the conversation of wise and excellent men, who, having lived in distant ages and countries upon earth, make one society in the other world.

It must also be acknowledged that Marcus Antoninus sometimes speaks of the soul as perishing, or dissolving into its elementary parts. But it is to be noted that he distinguisheth three principles in the composition of human nature, the *σῶμα, ψυχή, νοῦς*,[1]—*body, soul, mind*; or, as he otherwise expresseth himself, *σαρκία, πνευμάτιον*, and *ἡγεμονικὸν*—*flesh, spirit*, and *governing principle*. What he calls the *ψυχή*, or *soul*, containing the brutal part of our nature, is indeed represented as a compound dissoluble, and actually dissolved by death; but the *νοῦς*, or *τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν*—the *mind*, or *ruling principle*—he held to be of a pure celestial nature, *θεοῦ ἀπόσπασμα*, a *particle of God*, which he sends back entire to the stars and the Divinity. Besides, among all his mag-

[1] Marc. Antonin., lib. iii., cap. 16.

Digitized by Google

nificent lessons and splendid sentiments upon the force and beauty of virtue, he is positive as to the being of God; and that not merely as a plastic nature, or soul of the world, but in the strict sense of a Providence inspecting and taking care of human affairs.[1]

The Stoics, therefore, though their style was high, and often above truth and nature, yet it cannot be said that they so resolved every motive to a virtuous life into the sole beauty of virtue as to endeavour to destroy the belief of the immortality of the soul and a distributive Providence.[2] After all, allowing the disinterested Stoics (therein not unlike our modern Quietists) to have made virtue its own sole reward, in the most rigid and absolute sense, yet what is this to those who are no Stoics? If we adopt the whole principles of that sect, admitting their notions of good and evil, their celebrated apathy, and, in one word, setting up for complete Stoics, we may possibly maintain this doctrine with a better grace; at least it will be of a piece, and consistent with the whole. But he who shall borrow this splendid patch from the Stoics, and hope to make a figure by inserting it into a piece of modern composition, seasoned with the wit and notions of these times, will indeed make a figure, but perhaps it may not be in the eyes of a wise man the figure he intended.

15. Though it must be owned the present age is very indulgent to everything that aims at profane raillery; which is alone sufficient to recommend any fantastical composition to the public. You may behold the tinsel of a modern author pass upon this knowing and learned age for good writing; affected strains for wit; pedantry for politeness; obscurity for depths; ramblings for flights; the most awkward imitation for original humour; and all this upon the sole merit of a little artful profaneness.

*Alc.* Every one is not alike pleased with writings of humour, nor alike capable of them. It is the fine irony of a man of quality, "that certain reverend authors, who can condescend to lay-wit, are nicely qualified to hit the air of

[1] Marc. Antonin., lib. ii., cap. 11.

[2] See however Zellers, "Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics," trans. Reichel, *passim*.—ED.

Digitized by Google

breeding and gentility, and that they will in time, no doubt, refine their manner to the edification of the polite world; who have been so seduced by the way of raillery and wit."[1] The truth is, the various taste of readers requireth various kinds of writers. Our sect hath provided for this with great judgment. To proselyte the graver sort, we have certain profound men at reason and argument. For the coffee-houses and populace, we have declaimers of a copious vein. Of such a writer it is no reproach to say, *fluit lutulentus;* he is the fitter for his readers. Then, for men of rank and politeness, we have the finest and wittiest *railleurs* in the world, whose ridicule is the surest test of truth.

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, are those ingenious *railleurs* men of knowledge?

*Alc.* Very knowing.

*Euph.* Do they know, for instance, the Copernican system, or the circulation of the blood?

*Alc.* One would think you judged of our sect by your country neighbours: there is nobody in town but knows all those points.

*Euph.* You believe then antipodes, mountains in the moon, and the motion of the earth?

*Alc.* We do.

*Euph.* Suppose, five or six centuries ago, a man had maintained these notions among the *beaux esprits* of an English court; how do you think they would have been received?

*Alc.* With great ridicule.

*Euph.* And now it would be ridiculous to ridicule them?

*Alc.* It would.

*Euph.* But truth was the same then and now?

*Alc.* It was.

*Euph.* It should seem, therefore, that ridicule is no such sovereign touchstone and test of truth as you gentlemen imagine.

*Alc.* One thing we know: our raillery and sarcasms gall the black tribe, and that is our comfort.

*Cri.* There is another thing it may be worth your while to know: that men in a laughing fit may applaud a ridicule which shall appear contemptible when they come to them-

[1] Slightly altered from "Characteristics," vol. iii., p. 291.—ED.

Digitized by Google

selves. Witness the ridicule of Socrates by the comic poet, the humour and reception it met with no more proving that than the same will yours to be just, when calmly considered by men of sense.

*Alc.* After all, thus much is certain, our ingenious men make converts by deriding the principles of religion. And, take my word, it is the most successful and pleasing method of conviction. These authors laugh men out of their religion as Horace did out of their vices: *Admissi circum praecordia ludant.* But a bigot cannot relish or find out their wit.

16. *Cri.* Wit without wisdom, if there be such a thing, is hardly worth finding. And as for the wisdom of these men, it is of a kind so peculiar one may well suspect it. Cicero was a man of sense, and no bigot; nevertheless, he makes Scipio own himself much more vigilant and vigorous in the race of virtue, from supposing heaven the prize.[1] And he introduceth Cato declaring he would never have undergone those virtuous toils for the service of the public, if he had thought his being was to end with this life.[2]

*Alc.* I acknowledge Cato, Scipio, and Cicero were very well for their times; but you must pardon me if I do not think they arrived at the high, consummate virtue of our modern free-thinkers.

*Euph.* It should seem then that virtue flourisheth more than ever among us?

*Alc.* It should.

*Euph.* And this abundant virtue is owing to the method taken by your profound writers to recommend it.

*Alc.* This I grant.

*Euph.* But you have acknowledged that the enthusiastic lovers of virtue are not the many of your sect, but only a few select spirits.

To which Alciphron making no answer, Crito addressed himself to Euphranor:—To make, said he, a true estimate of the worth and growth of modern virtue, you are not to count the virtuous men, but rather to consider the quality of their virtue. Now, you must know the virtue of these refined theorists is something so pure and genuine that a very little goes far, and is in truth invaluable. To which that reason-

[1] "Somn. Scipionis." [2] "De Senectute."

Digitized by Google

able interested virtue of the old English or Spartan kind can bear no proportion.

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, are there not diseases of the soul as well as of the body?

*Alc.* Without doubt.

*Euph.* And are not those diseases vicious habits?

*Alc.* They are.

*Euph.* And, as bodily distempers are cured by physic, those of the mind are cured by philosophy: are they not?

*Alc.* I acknowledge it.

*Euph.* It seems, therefore, that philosophy is a medicine for the soul of man.

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* How shall we be able to judge of medicines, or know which to prefer? Is it not from the effects wrought by them?

*Alc.* Doubtless.

*Euph.* Where an epidemical distemper rages, suppose a new physician should condemn the known established practice, and recommend another method of cure, would you not, in proportion as the bills of mortality increased, be tempted to suspect this new method, notwithstanding all the plausible discourse of its abettors?

*Alc.* This serves only to amuse and lead us from the question.

*Cri.* It puts me in mind of my friend Lamprocles, who needed but one argument against infidels. I observed, said he, that as infidelity grew, there grew corruption of every kind, and new vices. This simple observation on matter of fact was sufficient to make him, notwithstanding the remonstrance of several ingenious men, imbue and season the minds of his children betimes with the principles of religion. The new theories, which our acute moderns have endeavoured to substitute in place of religion, have had their full course in the present age, and produced their effect on the minds and manners of men. That men are men, is a sure maxim: but it is as sure that Englishmen are not the same men they were; whether better or worse, more or less virtuous, I need not say. Every one may see and judge. Though, indeed, after Aristides had been banished, and Socrates put to death at Athens, a man, without being a conjuror, might guess what the Beauty of Virtue could do in England. But



Digitized by Google

there is now neither room nor occasion for guessing. We have our own experience to open our eyes; which yet, if we continue to keep shut till the remains of religious education are quite worn off from the minds of men, it is to be feared we shall then open them wide, not to avoid, but to behold and lament our ruin.

*Alc.* Be the consequences what they will, I can never bring myself to be of a mind with those who measure truth by convenience. Truth is the only divinity that I adore. Wherever truth leads, I shall follow.

*Euph.* You have then a passion for truth?

*Alc.* Undoubtedly.

*Euph.* For all truths?

*Alc.* For all.

*Euph.* To know, or to publish them?

*Alc.* Both.

*Euph.* What! would you undeceive a child that was taking physic? Would you officiously set an enemy right that was making a wrong attack? Would you help an enraged man to his sword?

*Alc.* In such cases, common sense directs one how to behave.

*Euph.* Common sense, it seems then, must be consulted whether a truth be salutary or hurtful, fit to be declared or concealed.

*Alc.* How? you would have me conceal and stifle the truth, and keep it to myself. Is this what you aim at?

*Euph.* I only make a plain inference from what you grant. As for myself, I do not believe your opinions true. And, although you do, you should not therefore, if you would appear consistent with yourself, think it necessary or wise to publish hurtful truths. What service can it do mankind to lessen the motives to virtue, or what damage to increase them?

*Alc.* None in the world. But, I must needs say I cannot reconcile the received notions of a God and Providence to my understanding, and my nature abhors the baseness of conniving at a falsehood.

*Euph.* Shall we therefore appeal to truth, and examine the reasons by which you are withheld from believing these points?

*Alc.* With all my heart; but enough for the present. We will make this the subject of our next conference.

Digitized by Google

# THE FOURTH DIALOGUE.[1]

1. Prejudices concerning a Deity. 2. Rules laid down by Alciphron to be observed in proving a God. 3. What sort of proof he expects. 4. Whence we collect the being of other thinking individuals. 5. The same method *a fortiori* proves the being of God. 6. Alciphron's second thoughts on this point. 7. God speaks to men. 8. How distance is perceived by sight. 9. The proper objects of sight at no distance. 10. Lights, shades, and colours, variously combined, form a language. 11. The signification of this language learned by experience. 12. God explaineth Himself to the eyes of men by the arbitrary use of sensible signs. 13. The prejudice and twofold aspect of a minute philosopher. 14. God present to mankind, informs, admonishes, and directs them in a sensible manner. 15. Admirable nature and use of this Visual Language. 16. Minute philosophers content to admit a God in certain senses. 17. Opinion of some who hold, that knowledge and wisdom are not properly in God. 18. Dangerous tendency of this notion. 19. Its original. 20. The sense of schoolmen upon it. 21. Scholastic use of the terms "analogy" and "analogical" explained: analogical perfections of God misunderstood. 22. God intelligent, wise, and good, in the proper sense of the words. 23. Objection from moral evil considered. 24. Men argue from their own defects against a Deity. 25. Religious worship reasonable and expedient.

## I.

EARLY the next morning, as I looked out of my window, I saw Alciphron walking in the garden with all the signs of a man in deep thought. Upon which I went down to him.

Alciphron, said I, this early and profound meditation puts me in no small fright. How so? Because I should be

[1] The two previous dialogues have been concerned with moral systems; in this the existence of a God is discussed. The dialogue must be read in the light of the Treatise on Human Knowledge, and especially the Essay on Vision, which Berkeley appended to the two earliest editions of "Alciphron" to explain his theory of "visual language." At sect. 17 *et seq.* the "analogical" theories of King and Browne are attacked. Toland's "Christianity not Mysterious" (1696), an attempt to rationalise Christianity, provoked much fierce controversy. Amongst

Digitized by Google

sorry to be convinced there was no God. The thought of anarchy in nature is to me more shocking than in civil life: inasmuch as natural concerns are more important than civil, and the basis of all others.

I grant, replied Alciphron, that some inconvenience may possibly follow from disproving a God: but as to what you say of fright and shocking, all that is nothing but mere prejudice. Men frame an idea or chimera in their own minds, and then fall down and worship it. Notions govern mankind: but of all notions that of God's governing the world hath taken the deepest root and spread the farthest: it is therefore in philosophy an heroical achievement to dispossess this imaginary monarch of his government, and banish all those fears and spectres which the light of reason alone can dispel:

> Non radii solis, non lucida tela diei
> Discutiunt, sed naturae species ratioque.[1]

My part, said I, shall be to stand by, as I have hitherto done, and take notes of all that passeth during this memorable event; while a minute philosopher, not six feet high, attempts to dethrone the monarch of the universe.

Alas! replied Alciphron, arguments are not to be measured by feet and inches. One man may see more than a million; and a short argument, managed by a free-thinker, may be sufficient to overthrow the most gigantic chimera.

others, Peter Browne, afterwards Bishop of Cork, wrote an "Answer" (1697), and William King, Archbishop of Dublin, directed his sermon, "Divine Predestination and Foreknowledge consistent, &c." (1709) against the heresy. In both these works all Christian mysteries and Divine attributes are explained to be understood by *analogy*; but in King's sermon the distinction between *analogy* and *metaphor* is not well observed. (See pp. 8, 9, 21, &c., of the "Sermon.") Browne in two later works, "Procedure, &c., of Human Understanding" (1728), and "Things Divine and Supernatural conceived by Analogy with Things Natural and Human" (1733), extended the idea, but insisted on the notion of *analogy* rather than *metaphor* (which King's definitions seemed to indicate) because a greater *reality* of likeness is implied in the former. (See "Procedure," p. 13, &c., "Analogy," p. 2, &c.) What Berkeley thought of these doctrines can be learned in the sections indicated. Browne concludes his "Analogy" (which was published a year after "Alciphron") with a lengthy attack on Berkeley (pp. 374-554).—ED.

[1] Lucretius.

Digitized by Google

As we were engaged in this discourse, Crito and Euphranor joined us.

I find you have been beforehand with us to-day, said Crito to Alciphron, and taken the advantage of solitude and early hours, while Euphranor and I were asleep in our beds. We may, therefore, expect to see atheism placed in the best light, and supported by the strongest arguments.

2. *Alc.* The being of a God is a subject upon which there has been a world of commonplace, which it is needless to repeat. Give me leave therefore to lay down certain rules and limitations, in order to shorten our present conference. For, as the end of debating is to persuade, all those things which are foreign to this end should be left out of our debate. First then, let me tell you I am not to be persuaded by metaphysical arguments; such, for instance, as are drawn from the idea of an all-perfect being, or the absurdity of an infinite progression of causes. This sort of arguments I have always found dry and jejune; and, as they are not suited to my way of thinking, they may perhaps puzzle, but never will convince me. Secondly, I am not to be persuaded by the authority either of past or present ages, of mankind in general, or of particular wise men, all which passeth for little or nothing with a man of sound argument and free thought. Thirdly, all proofs drawn from utility or convenience are foreign to the purpose. They may prove indeed the usefulness of the notion, but not the existence of the thing. Whatever legislators or statesmen may think, truth and convenience are very different things to the rigorous eye of a philosopher.

And now, that I may not seem partial, I will limit myself also not to object, in the first place, from anything that may seem irregular or unaccountable in the works of nature, against a cause of infinite power and wisdom; because I already know the answer you will make, to wit, that no one can judge of the symmetry and use of the parts of an infinite machine, which are all relative to each other, and to the whole, without being able to comprehend the entire machine, or the whole universe. And, in the second place, I shall engage myself not to object against the justice and providence of a supreme Being from the evil that befalls good

Digitized by Google

men, and the prosperity which is often the portion of wicked men in this life; because I know that, instead of admitting this to be an objection against a Deity, you would make it an argument for a future state, in which there shall be such a retribution of rewards and punishments as may vindicate the Divine attributes, and set all things right in the end. Now, these answers, though they should be admitted for good ones, are in truth no proofs of the being of God, but only solutions of certain difficulties which might be objected, supposing it already proved by proper arguments. Thus much I thought fit to premise, in order to save time and trouble both to you and myself.

*Cri.* I think that as the proper end of our conference ought to be supposed the discovery and defence of truth, so truth may be justified, not only by persuading its adversaries, but, where that cannot be done, by shewing them to be unreasonable. Arguments, therefore, which carry light have their effect, even against an opponent who shuts his eyes, because they shew him to be obstinate and prejudiced. Besides, this distinction between arguments that puzzle and that convince, is least of all observed by minute philosophers, and need not therefore be observed by others in their favour. But, perhaps, Euphranor may be willing to encounter you on your own terms, in which case I have nothing further to say.

3. *Euph.* Alciphron acts like a skilful general, who is bent upon gaining the advantage of the ground, and alluring the enemy out of their trenches. We who believe a God are intrenched within Tradition, Custom, Authority, and Law. And, nevertheless, instead of attempting to force us, he proposes that he should voluntarily abandon these intrenchments, and make the attack; when we may act on the defensive with much security and ease, leaving him the trouble to dispossess us of what we need not resign. Those reasons (continued he, addressing himself to Alciphron) which you have mustered up in this morning's meditation, if they do not weaken, must establish our belief of a God; for the utmost is to be expected from so great a master in his profession, when he sets his strength to a point.

*Alc.* I hold the confused notion of a Deity, or some invisible power, to be of all prejudices the most unconquerable.

Digitized by Google

When half-a-dozen ingenious men are got together over a glass of wine, by a cheerful fire, in a room well lighted, we banish with ease all the spectres of fancy and education, and are very clear in our decisions. But, as I was taking a solitary walk before it was broad daylight in yonder grove, methought the point was not quite so clear; nor could I readily recollect the force of those arguments which used to appear so conclusive at other times. I had I know not what awe upon my mind, and seemed haunted by a sort of panic, which I cannot otherwise account for than by supposing it the effect of prejudice: for, you must know that I, like the rest of the world, was once upon a time catechised and tutored into the belief of a God or Spirit. There is no surer mark of prejudice than the believing a thing without reason. What necessity then can there be that I should set myself the difficult task of proving a negative when it is sufficient to observe that there is no proof of the affirmative, and that the admitting it without proof is unreasonable? Prove therefore your opinion; or, if you cannot, you may indeed remain in possession of it, but you will only be possessed of a prejudice.

*Euph.* O Alciphron, to content you we must prove, it seems, and we must prove upon your own terms. But, in the first place, let us see what sort of proof you expect.

*Alc.* Perhaps I may not expect it, but I will tell you what sort of proof I would have: and that is, in short, such proof as every man of sense requires of a matter of fact, or the existence of any other particular thing. For instance, should a man ask why I believe there is a king of Great Britain? I might answer—Because I had seen him. Or a king of Spain? Because I had seen those who saw him. But as for this King of kings, I neither saw Him myself, nor any one else that ever did see Him. Surely, if there be such a thing as God, it is very strange that He should leave Himself without a witness; that men should still dispute His being; and that there should be no one evident, sensible, plain proof of it, without recourse to philosophy or metaphysics. A matter of fact is not to be proved by notions, but by facts. This is clear and full to the point. You see what I would be at. Upon these principles I defy superstition.

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* You believe then as far as you can see?

*Alc.* That is my rule of faith.

*Euph.* How! will you not believe the existence of things which you hear, unless you also see them?

*Alc.* I will not say so neither. When I insisted on *seeing*, I would be understood to mean perceiving in general. Outward objects make very different impressions upon the animal spirits, all which are comprised under the common name of *sense*. And whatever we can perceive by any sense we may be sure of.

4. *Euph.* What! do you believe then that there are such things as animal spirits?

*Alc.* Doubtless.

*Euph.* By what sense do you perceive them?

*Alc.* I do not perceive them immediately by any of my senses. I am nevertheless persuaded of their existence, because I can collect it from their effects and operations. They are the messengers which, running to and fro in the nerves, preserve a communication between the soul and outward objects.

*Euph.* You admit then the being of a soul?

*Alc.* Provided I do not admit an immaterial substance, I see no inconvenience in admitting there may be such a thing as a soul. And this may be no more than a thin fine texture of subtile parts or spirits residing in the brain.

*Euph.* I do not ask about its nature. I only ask whether you admit that there is a principle of thought and action, and whether it be perceivable by sense.

*Alc.* I grant that there is such a principle, and that it is not the object of sense itself, but inferred from appearances which are perceived by sense.

*Euph.* If I understand you rightly, from animal functions and motions you infer the existence of animal spirits, and from reasonable acts you infer the existence of a reasonable soul. Is it not so?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* It should seem, therefore, that the being of things imperceptible to sense may be collected from effects and signs, or sensible tokens.

*Alc.* It may.

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, is not the soul that which makes the principal distinction between a real person and a shadow, a living man and a carcass?

*Alc.* I grant it is.

*Euph.* I cannot, therefore, know that *you*, for instance, are a distinct thinking individual, or a living real man, by surer or other signs than those from which it can be inferred that you have a soul?

*Alc.* You cannot.

*Euph.* Pray tell me, are not all acts immediately and properly perceived by sense reducible to motion?

*Alc.* They are.

*Euph.* From motions, therefore, you infer a mover or cause; and from reasonable motions (or such as appear calculated for a reasonable end) a rational cause, soul or spirit?

*Alc.* Even so.

5. *Euph.* The soul of man actuates but a small body, an insignificant particle, in respect of the great masses of nature, the elements, and heavenly bodies, and system of the world. And the wisdom that appears in those motions which are the effect of human reason is incomparably less than that which discovers itself in the structure and use of organized natural bodies, animal or vegetable. A man with his hand can make no machine so admirable as the hand itself; nor can any of those motions by which we trace out human reason approach the skill and contrivance of those wonderful motions of the heart, and brain, and other vital parts, which do not depend on the will of man.

*Alc.* All this is true.

*Euph.* Doth it not follow, then, that from natural motions, independent of man's will, may be inferred both power and wisdom incomparably greater than that of the human soul?

*Alc.* It should seem so.

*Euph.* Further, is there not in natural productions and effects a visible unity of counsel and design? Are not the rules fixed and immoveable? Do not the same laws of motion obtain throughout? The same in China and here, the same two thousand years ago and at this day?

*Alc.* All this I do not deny.

*Euph.* Is there not also a connexion or relation between

Digitized by Google

animals and vegetables, between both and the elements, between the elements and heavenly bodies; so that, from their mutual respects, influences, subordinations, and uses, they may be collected to be parts of one whole, conspiring to one and the same end, and fulfilling the same design?

*Alc.* Supposing all this to be true.

*Euph.* Will it not then follow that this vastly great, or infinite power and wisdom must be supposed in one and the same Agent, Spirit, or Mind; and that we have at least as clear, full, and immediate certainty of the being of this infinitely wise and powerful Spirit, as of any one human soul whatsoever besides our own?

*Alc.* Let me consider: I suspect we proceed too hastily. What! Do you pretend you can have the same assurance of the being of a God that you can have of mine, whom you actually see stand before you and talk to you?

*Euph.* The very same, if not greater.

*Alc.* How do you make this appear?

*Euph.* By the person Alciphron is meant an individual thinking thing, and not the hair, skin, or visible surface, or any part of the outward form, colour, or shape, of Alciphron.

*Alc.* This I grant.

*Euph.* And, in granting this, you grant that, in a strict sense, I do not see Alciphron, *i.e.* that individual thinking thing, but only such visible signs and tokens as suggest and infer the being of that invisible thinking principle or soul. Even so, in the self-same manner, it seems to me that, though I cannot with eyes of flesh behold the invisible God, yet I do in the strictest sense behold and perceive by all my senses such signs and tokens, such effects and operations, as suggest, indicate, and demonstrate an invisible God, as certainly, and with the same evidence, at least, as any other signs, perceived by sense, do suggest to me the existence of your soul, spirit, or thinking principle; which I am convinced of only by a few signs or effects, and the motions of one small organized body: whereas I do at all times and in all places perceive sensible signs which evince the being of God. The point, therefore, doubted or denied by you at the beginning, now seems manifestly to follow from the premises. Throughout this whole inquiry, have we not considered every step with care, and made not the least advance without clear evidence?

Digitized by Google

You and I examined and assented singly to each foregoing proposition: what shall we do then with the conclusion? For my part, if you do not help me out, I find myself under an absolute necessity of admitting it for true. You must therefore be content henceforward to bear the blame, if I live and die in the belief of a God.

6. *Alc.* It must be confessed, I do not readily find an answer. There seems to be some foundation for what you say. But, on the other hand, if the point was so clear as you pretend, I cannot conceive how so many sagacious men of our sect should be so much in the dark as not to know or believe one syllable of it.

*Euph.* O Alciphron, it is not our present business to account for the oversights, or vindicate the honour, of those great men the free-thinkers, when their very existence is in danger of being called in question.

*Alc.* How so?

*Euph.* Be pleased to recollect the concessions you have made, and then shew me, if the arguments for a Deity be not conclusive, by what better arguments you can prove the existence of that thinking thing which in strictness constitutes the free-thinker.

As soon as Euphranor had uttered these words, Alciphron stopped short, and stood in a posture of meditation, while the rest of us continued our walk and took two or three turns, after which he joined us again with a smiling countenance, like one who had made some discovery. I have found, said said he, what may clear up the point in dispute, and give Euphranor entire satisfaction; I would say an argument which will prove the existence of a free-thinker, the like whereof cannot be applied to prove the existence of God. You must know then that your notion of our perceiving the existence of God, as certainly and immediately as we do that of a human person, I could by no means digest, though I must own it puzzled me, till I had considered the matter. At first methought a particular structure, shape, or motion was a most certain proof of a thinking reasonable soul. But a little attention satisfied me that these things have no necessary connexion with reason, knowledge, and wisdom; and that, allowing them to be certain proofs of a living soul,

Digitized by Google

they cannot be so of a thinking and reasonable one. Upon second thoughts, therefore, and a minute examination of this point, I have found that nothing so much convinces me of the existence of another person as *his speaking to me.* It is my hearing you talk that, in strict and philosophical truth, is to me the best argument for your being. And this is a peculiar argument, inapplicable to your purpose; for, you will not, I suppose, pretend that God speaks to man in the same clear and sensible manner as one man doth to another?

7. *Euph.* How! is then the impression of sound so much more evident than that of other senses? Or, if it be, is the voice of man louder than that of thunder?

*Alc.* Alas! you mistake the point. What I mean is not the sound of speech merely as such, but the arbitrary use of sensible signs, which have no similitude or necessary connexion with the things signified; so as by the apposite management of them to suggest and exhibit to my mind an endless variety of things, differing in nature, time, and place; thereby informing me, entertaining me, and directing me how to act, not only with regard to things near and present, but also with regard to things distant and future. No matter whether these signs are pronounced or written; whether they enter by the eye or ear: they have the same use, and are equally proofs of an intelligent, thinking, designing cause.

*Euph.* But what if it should appear that God really speaks to man; would this content you?

*Alc.* I am for admitting no inward speech, no holy instincts, or suggestions of light or spirit. All that, you must know, passeth with men of sense for nothing. If you do not make it plain to me that God speaks to men by outward sensible signs, of such sort and in such manner as I have defined, you do nothing.

*Euph.* But if it shall appear plainly that God speaks to men by the intervention and use of arbitrary, outward, sensible signs, having no resemblance or necessary connexion with the things they stand for and suggest: if it shall appear that, by innumerable combinations of these signs, an endless variety of things is discovered and made known to us; and that we

Digitized by Google

are thereby instructed or informed in their different natures; that we are taught and admonished what to shun, and what to pursue; and are directed how to regulate our motions, and how to act with respect to things distant from us, as well in time as place, will this content you?

*Alc.* It is the very thing I would have you make out; for therein consists the force, and use, and nature of language.

8. *Euph.* Look, Alciphron, do you not see the castle upon yonder hill?

*Alc.* I do.

*Euph.* Is it not at a great distance from you?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, is not distance a line turned endwise to the eye?

*Alc.* Doubtless.

*Euph.* And can a line, in that situation, project more than one single point on the bottom of the eye?

*Alc.* It cannot.

*Euph.* Therefore the appearance of a long and of a short distance is of the same magnitude, or rather of no magnitude at all, being in all cases one single point.

*Alc.* It seems so.

*Euph.* Should it not follow from hence that distance is not immediately perceived by the eye?

*Alc.* It should.

*Euph.* Must it not then be perceived by the mediation of some other thing?

*Alc.* It must.

*Euph.* To discover what this is, let us examine what alteration there may be in the appearance of the same object, placed at different distances from the eye. Now, I find by experience that when an object is removed still farther and farther off in a direct line from the eye, its visible appearance still grows lesser and fainter; and this change of appearance being proportional and universal, seems to me to be that by which we apprehend the various degrees of distance.

*Alc.* I have nothing to object to this.

*Euph.* But littleness or faintness, in their own nature, seem to have no necessary connexion with greater length of distance?

Digitized by Google

*Alc.* I admit this to be true.

*Euph.* Will it not follow then that they could never suggest it but from experience?

*Alc.* It will.

*Euph.* That is to say, we perceive distance, not immediately, but by mediation of a sign, which hath no likeness to it, or necessary connexion with it, but only suggests it from repeated experience, as words do things.

*Alc.* Hold, Euphranor: now I think of it, the writers in optics tell us of an angle made by the two optic axes, where they meet in the visible point or object; which angle, the obtuser it is the nearer it shews the object to be, and by how much the acuter, by so much the farther off; and this from a necessary demonstrable connexion.

*Euph.* The mind then finds out the distance of things by geometry?

*Alc.* It doth.

*Euph.* Should it not follow, therefore, that nobody could see but those who had learned geometry, and knew something of lines and angles?

*Alc.* There is a sort of natural geometry which is got without learning.

*Euph.* Pray inform me, Alciphron, in order to frame a proof of any kind, or deduce one point from another, is it not necessary that I perceive the connexion of the terms in the premises, and the connexion of the premises with the conclusion; and, in general, to know one thing by means of another, must I not first know that other thing? When I perceive your meaning by your words, must I not first perceive the words themselves? and must I not know the premises before I infer the conclusion?

*Alc.* All this is true.

*Euph.* Whoever, therefore, collects a nearer distance from a wider angle, or a farther distance from an acuter angle, must first perceive the angles themselves. And he who doth not perceive those angles can infer nothing from them. Is it so or not?

*Alc.* It is as you say.

*Euph.* Ask now the first man you meet whether he perceives or knows anything of those optic angles? or whether he ever thinks about them, or makes any inferences from

Digitized by Google

them, either by natural or artificial geometry? What answer do you think he would make?

*Alc.* To speak the truth, I believe his answer would be, that he knew nothing of these matters.

*Euph.* It cannot therefore be that men judge of distance by angles: nor, consequently, can there be any force in the argument you drew from thence, to prove that distance is perceived by means of something which hath a necessary connexion with it.

*Alc.* I agree with you.

9. *Euph.* To me it seems that a man may know whether he perceives a thing or no; and, if he perceives it, whether it be immediately or mediately: and, if mediately, whether by means of something like or unlike, necessarily or arbitrarily connected with it.

*Alc.* It seems so.

*Euph.* And is it not certain that distance is perceived only by experience, if it be neither perceived immediately by itself, nor by means of any image, nor of any lines and angles which are like it, or have a necessary connexion with it?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* Doth it not seem to follow, from what hath been said and allowed by you, that before all experience a man would not imagine the things he saw were at any distance from him?

*Alc.* How! let me see.

*Euph.* The littleness or faintness of appearance, or any other idea or sensation not necessarily connected with or resembling distance, can no more suggest different degrees of distance, or any distance at all, to the mind which hath not experienced a connexion of the things signifying and signified, than words can suggest notions before a man hath learned the language.

*Alc.* I allow this to be true.

*Euph.* Will it not thence follow that a man born blind, and made to see, would, upon first receiving his sight, take the things he saw not to be at any distance from him, but in his eye, or rather in his mind?

*Alc.* I must own it seems so. And yet, on the other

Digitized by Google

hand, I can hardly persuade myself that, if I were in such a state, I should think those objects which I now see at so great distance to be at no distance at all.

*Euph.* It seems, then, that you now think the objects of sight are at a distance from you?

*Alc.* Doubtless I do. Can any one question but yonder castle is at a great distance?

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, can you discern the doors, windows, and battlements of that same castle?

*Alc.* I cannot. At this distance it seems only a small round tower.

*Euph.* But I, who have been at it, know that it is no small round tower, but a large square building with battlements and turrets, which it seems you do not see.

*Alc.* What will you infer from thence?

*Euph.* I would infer that the very object which you strictly and properly perceive by sight is not that thing which is several miles distant.

*Alc.* Why so?

*Euph.* Because a little round object is one thing, and a great square object is another. Is it not?

*Alc.* I cannot deny it.

*Euph.* Tell me, is not the visible appearance alone the proper object of sight?

*Alc.* It is.

What think you now (said Euphranor, pointing towards the heavens) of the visible appearance of yonder planet? Is it not a round luminous flat, no bigger than a sixpence?

*Alc.* What then?

*Euph.* Tell me then, what you think of the planet itself. Do you not conceive it to be a vast opaque globe, with several unequal risings and valleys?

*Alc.* I do.

*Euph.* How can you therefore conclude that the proper object of your sight exists at a distance?

*Alc.* I confess I know not.

*Euph.* For your farther conviction, do but consider that crimson cloud. Think you that, if you were in the very place where it is, you would perceive anything like what you now see?

*Alc.* By no means. I should perceive only a dark mist.

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* Is it not plain, therefore, that neither the castle, the planet, nor the cloud, which you see here, are those real ones which you suppose exist at a distance?

10. *Alc.* What am I to think then? Do we see anything at all, or is it altogether fancy and illusion?

*Euph.* Upon the whole, it seems the proper objects of sight are light and colours, with their several shades and degrees; all which, being infinitely diversified and combined, do form a language wonderfully adapted to suggest and exhibit to us the distances, figures, situations, dimensions, and various qualities of tangible objects: not by similitude, nor yet by inference of necessary connexion, but by the arbitrary imposition of Providence, just as words suggest the things signified by them.

*Alc.* How! Do we not, strictly speaking, perceive by sight such things as trees, houses, men, rivers, and the like?

*Euph.* We do, indeed, perceive or apprehend those things by the faculty of sight. But, will it follow from thence that they are the proper and immediate objects of sight, any more than that all those things are the proper and immediate objects of hearing which are signified by the help of words or sounds?

*Alc.* You would have us think, then, that light, shades, and colours, variously combined, answer to the several articulations of sound in language; and that, by means thereof, all sorts of objects are suggested to the mind through the eye, in the same manner as they are suggested by words or sounds through the ear: that is, neither from necessary deduction to the judgment, nor from similitude to the fancy, but purely and solely from experience, custom, and habit.

*Euph.* I would not have you think anything more than the nature of things obligeth you to think, nor submit in the least to my judgment, but only to the force of truth: which is an imposition that I suppose the freest thinkers will not pretend to be exempt from.

*Alc.* You have led me, it seems, step by step, till I am got I know not where. But I shall try to get out again, if not by the way I came, yet by some other of my own finding.



Digitized by Google

Here Alciphron, having made a short pause, proceeded as follows.

11. Answer me, Euphranor, should it not follow from these principles that a man born blind, and made to see, would, at first sight, not only not perceive their distance, but also not so much as know the very things themselves which he saw, for instance, men or trees? which surely to suppose must be absurd.

*Euph.* I grant, in consequence of those principles, which both you and I have admitted, that such a one would never think of men, trees, or any other objects that he had been accustomed to perceive by touch, upon having his mind filled with new sensations of light and colours, whose various combinations he doth not yet understand, or know the meaning of; no more than a Chinese, upon first hearing the words *man* and *tree* would think of the things signified by them. In both cases, there must be time and experience, by repeated acts, to acquire a habit of knowing the connexion between the signs and things signified; that is to say, of understanding the language, whether of the eyes or of the ears. And I conceive no absurdity in all this.

*Alc.* I see, therefore, in strict philosophical truth, that rock only in the same sense that I may be said to hear it, when the word *rock* is pronounced.

*Euph.* In the very same.

*Alc.* How comes it to pass then that every one shall say he sees, for instance, a rock or a house, when those things are before his eyes; but nobody will say he hears a rock or a house, but only the words or sounds themselves by which those things are said to be signified or suggested but not heard? Besides, if vision be only a language speaking to the eyes, it may be asked, when did men learn this language? To acquire the knowledge of so many signs as go to the making up a language is a work of some difficulty. But, will any man say he hath spent time, or been at pains, to learn this Language of Vision?

*Euph.* No wonder; we cannot assign a time beyond our remotest memory. If we have been all practising this language, ever since our first entrance into the world: if the Author of Nature constantly speaks to the eyes of all man-

Digitized by Google

kind, even in their earliest infancy, whenever the eyes are open in the light, whether alone or in company: it doth not seem to me at all strange that men should not be aware they had ever learned a language begun so early, and practised so constantly, as this of Vision. And, if we also consider that it is the same throughout the whole world, and not, like other languages, differing in different places, it will not seem unaccountable that men should mistake the connexion between the proper objects of sight and the things signified by them to be founded in necessary relation or likeness; or, that they should even take them for the same things. Hence it seems easy to conceive why men who do not think should confound in this language of vision the signs with the things signified, otherwise than they are wont to do in the various particular languages formed by the several nations of men.

12. It may be also worth while to observe that signs, being little considered in themselves, or for their own sake, but only in their relative capacity, and for the sake of those things whereof they are signs, it comes to pass that the mind overlooks them, so as to carry its attention immediately on to the things signified. Thus, for example, in reading we run over the characters with the slightest regard, and pass on to the meaning. Hence it is frequent for men to say, they see words, and notions, and things in reading of a book; whereas in strictness they see only the characters which suggest words, notions, and things. And, by parity of reason, may we not suppose that men, not resting in, but overlooking the immediate and proper objects of sight, as in their own nature of small moment, carry their attention onward to the very things signified, and talk as if they saw the secondary objects? which, in truth and strictness, are not seen, but only suggested and apprehended by means of the proper objects of sight, which alone are seen.

*Alc.* To speak my mind freely, this dissertation grows tedious, and runs into points too dry and minute for a gentleman's attention.

I thought, said Crito, we had been told that minute philosophers loved to consider things closely and minutely.

*Alc.* That is true, but in so polite an age who would be a mere philosopher? There is a certain scholastic accuracy

Digitized by Google

which ill suits the freedom and ease of a well-bred man. But, to cut short this chicane, I propound it fairly to your own conscience, whether you really think that God Himself speaks every day and in every place to the eyes of all men.

*Euph.* That is really and in truth my opinion; and it should be yours too, if you are consistent with yourself, and abide by your own definition of language. Since you cannot deny that the great Mover and Author of nature constantly explaineth Himself to the eyes of men by the sensible intervention of arbitrary signs, which have no similitude or connexion with the things signified; so as, by compounding and disposing them, to suggest and exhibit an endless variety of objects, differing in nature, time, and place; thereby informing and directing men how to act with respect to things distant and future, as well as near and present. In consequence, I say, of your own sentiments and concessions, you have as much reason to think the Universal Agent or God speaks to your eyes, as you can have for thinking any particular person speaks to your ears.

*Alc.* I cannot help thinking that some fallacy runs through this whole ratiocination, though perhaps I may not readily point it out. It seems to me that every other sense may as well be deemed a language as that of vision. Smells and tastes, for instance, are signs that inform us of other qualities to which they have neither likeness nor necessary connexion.

*Euph.* That they are signs is certain, as also that language and all other signs agree in the general nature of sign, or so far forth as signs. But it is as certain that all signs are not language: not even all significant sounds: such as the natural cries of animals, or the inarticulate sounds and interjections of men. It is the articulation, combination, variety, copiousness, extensive and general use and easy application of signs (all which are commonly found in vision) that constitute the true nature of language. Other senses may indeed furnish signs; and yet those signs have no more right than inarticulate sounds to be thought a language.

*Alc.* Hold! let me see. In language the signs are arbitrary, are they not.[1]

[1] In the first and second editions, instead of the last three speeches, there was one, as follows:

"*Alc.* I cannot help thinking that some fallacy runs throughout this

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* They are.

*Alc.* And, consequently, they do not always suggest real matters of fact. Whereas this Natural Language, as you call it, or these visible signs, do always suggest things in the same uniform way, and have the same constant regular connexion with matters of fact: whence it should seem the connexion was necessary; and, therefore, according to the definition premised, it can be no language. How do you solve this objection?

*Euph.* You may solve it yourself by the help of a picture or looking-glass.

*Alc.* You are in the right. I see there is nothing in it. I know not what else to say to this opinion, more than that it is so odd and contrary to my way of thinking that I shall never assent to it.

13. *Euph.* Be pleased to recollect your own lectures upon prejudice, and apply them in the present case. Perhaps they may help you to follow where reason leads, and to suspect notions which are strongly rivetted, without having been ever examined.

*Alc.* I disdain the suspicion of prejudice. And I do not speak only for myself. I know a club of most ingenious men, the freest from prejudice of any men alive, who abhor the notion of a God, and I doubt not would be very able to untie this knot.

Upon which words of Alciphron, I, who had acted the part of an indifferent stander-by, observed to him: That it misbecame his character and repeated professions, to own an attachment to the judgment, or build upon the presumed abilities of other men, how ingenious soever; and that this proceeding might encourage his adversaries to have recourse to authority, in which perhaps they would find their account more than he.

Oh! said Crito, I have often observed the conduct of minute philosophers. When one of them has got a ring of disciples round him, his method is to exclaim against prejudice, and recommend thinking and reasoning, giving to

whole ratiocination, though perhaps I may not readily point it out. Hold! let me see. In language the signs are arbitrary, are they not? "*Euph.* They are," &c.—ED.

Digitized by Google

understand that himself is a man of deep researches and close argument, one who examines impartially, and concludes warily. The same man, in other company, if he chance to be pressed with reason, shall laugh at logic, and assume the lazy supine airs of a fine gentleman, a wit, a *railleur*, to avoid the dryness of a regular and exact inquiry. This double face of the minute philosopher is of no small use to propagate and maintain his notions. Though to me it seems a plain case that if a fine gentleman will shake off authority, and appeal from religion to reason, unto reason he must go: and, if he cannot go without leading-strings, surely he had better be led by the authority of the public than by that of any knot of minute philosophers.

*Alc.* Gentlemen, this discourse is very irksome, and needless. For my part, I am a friend to inquiry. I am willing reason should have its full and free scope. I build on no man's authority. For my part, I have no interest in denying a God. Any man may believe or not believe a God, as he pleases, for me. But, after all, Euphranor must allow me to stare a little at his conclusions.

*Euph.* The conclusions are yours as much as mine, for you were led to them by your own concessions.

14. You, it seems, stare to find that God is not far from every one of us; and that in Him we live, and move, and have our being. You, who, in the beginning of this morning's conference, thought it strange that God should leave Himself without a witness, do now think it strange the witness should be so full and clear.

*Alc.* I must own I do. I was aware, indeed, of a certain metaphysical hypothesis of our seeing all things in God by the union of the human soul with the intelligible substance of the Deity, which neither I, nor any one else could make sense of. But I never imagined it could be pretended that we saw God with our fleshly eyes as plain as we see any human person whatsoever, and that He daily speaks to our senses in a manifest and clear dialect.

*Cri.* [1]As for that metaphysical hypothesis, I can make no more of it than you. But I think it plain this optic lan-

[1] In the first edition, this speech began thus: "This language hath a necessary connexion," &c.—ED.

Digitized by Google

guage hath a necessary connexion with knowledge, wisdom, and goodness. It is equivalent to a constant creation, betokening an immediate act of power and providence. It cannot be accounted for by mechanical principles, by atoms, attractions, or effluvia. The instantaneous production and reproduction of so many signs, combined, dissolved, transposed, diversified, and adapted to such an endless variety of purposes, ever shifting with the occasions and suited to them, being utterly inexplicable and unaccountable by the laws of motion, by chance, by fate, or the like blind principles, doth set forth and testify the immediate operation of a spirit or thinking being; and not merely of a spirit, which every motion or gravitation may possibly infer, but of one wise, good, and provident Spirit, which directs and rules and governs the world. Some philosophers, being convinced of the wisdom and power of the Creator, from the make and contrivance of organized bodies and orderly system of the world, did nevertheless imagine that he left this system with all its parts and contents well adjusted and put in motion, as an artist leaves a clock, to go thenceforward of itself for a certain period. But this Visual Language proves, not a Creator merely, but a provident Governor, actually and intimately present, and attentive to all our interests and motions, who watches over our conduct, and takes care of our minutest actions and designs throughout the whole course of our lives, informing, admonishing, and directing incessantly, in a most evident and sensible manner. This is truly wonderful.

*Euph.* And is it not so, that men should be encompassed by such a wonder, without reflecting on it?

15. Something there is of Divine and admirable in this Language, addressed to our eyes, that may well awaken the mind, and deserve its utmost attention: it is learned with so little pains: it expresseth the differences of things so clearly and aptly: it instructs with such facility and despatch, by one glance of the eye conveying a greater variety of advices, and a more distinct knowledge of things, than could be got by a discourse of several hours. And, while it informs, it amuses and entertains the mind with such singular pleasure and delight. It is of such excellent use in giving a stability

Digitized by Google

and permanency to human discourse, in recording sounds and bestowing life on dead languages, enabling us to converse with men of remote ages and countries. And it answers so apposite to the uses and necessities of mankind, informing us more distinctly of those objects whose nearness and magnitude qualify them to be of greatest detriment or benefit to our bodies, and less exactly in proportion as their littleness or distance makes them of less concern to us.

*Alc.* And yet these strange things affect men but little.

*Euph.* But they are not strange, they are familiar; and that makes them be overlooked. Things which rarely happen strike; whereas frequency lessens the admiration of things, though in themselves ever so admirable. Hence, a common man, who is not used to think and make reflexions, would probably be more convinced of the being of a God by one single sentence heard once in his life from the sky than by all the experience he has had of this Visual Language, contrived with such exquisite skill, so constantly addressed to his eyes, and so plainly declaring the nearness, wisdom, and providence of Him with whom we have to do.

*Alc.* After all, I cannot satisfy myself how men should be so little surprised or amazed about this visive faculty, if it was really of a nature so surprising and amazing.

*Euph.* But let us suppose a nation of men blind from their infancy, among whom a stranger arrives, the only man who can see in all the country; let us suppose this stranger travelling with some of the natives, and that one while he foretells to them that, in case they walk straight forward, in half an hour they shall meet men or cattle, or come to a house; that, if they turn to the right and proceed, they shall in a few minutes be in danger of falling down a precipice; that, shaping their course to the left, they will in such a time arrive at a river, a wood, or a mountain. What think you? Must they not be infinitely surprised that one who had never been in their country before should know it so much better than themselves? And would not those predictions seem to them as unaccountable and incredible as Prophecy to a minute philosopher?

*Alc.* I cannot deny it.

*Euph.* But it seems to require intense thought to be able

Digitized by Google

to unravel a prejudice that has been so long forming; to get over the vulgar errors or ideas common to both senses; and so to distinguish between the objects of sight and touch,[1] which have grown (if I may so say), blended together in our fancy, as to be able to suppose ourselves exactly in the state that one of those men would be in, if he were made to see. And yet this I believe is possible, and might seem worth the pains of a little thinking, especially to those men whose proper employment and profession it is to think and unravel prejudices, and confute mistakes.

*Alc.* I frankly own I cannot find my way out of this maze, and should gladly be set right by those who see better than myself.

*Cri.* The pursuing this subject in their own thoughts would possibly open a new scene to those speculative gentlemen of the minute philosophy. It puts me in mind of a passage in the Psalmist, where he represents God to be covered with light as with a garment, and would methinks be no ill comment on that ancient notion of some eastern sages—that God had light for His body, and truth for His soul.

This conversation lasted till a servant came to tell us the tea was ready: upon which we walked in, and found Lysicles at the tea-table.

16. As soon as we sat down, I am glad, said Alciphron, that I have here found my second, a fresh man to maintain our common cause, which, I doubt, Lysicles will think hath suffered by his absence.

*Lys.* Why so?

*Alc.* I have been drawn into some concessions you will not like.

[1] The Essay on Vision was annexed to the first two editions of "Alciphron," and in them, at this point, this note occurred: "See the annexed Treatise, wherein this point and the whole Theory of Vision are more fully explained: the paradoxes of which Theory, though at first received with great ridicule by those who think ridicule the test of truth, were many years after surprisingly confirmed, by a case of a person made to see who had been blind from his birth. See 'Philos. Transact.,' No. 402,"—or rather, in the first edition the note extended to "explained," and in the second was as above. "Alciphron" was printed alone in 1752, and the note was then omitted.—ED.

Digitized by Google

*Lys.* Let me know what they are.

*Alc.* Why, that there is such a thing as a God, and that His existence is very certain.

*Lys.* Bless me! How came you to entertain so wild a notion?

*Alc.* You know we profess to follow reason wherever it leads. And in short I have been reasoned into it.

*Lys.* Reasoned! You should say, amused with words, bewildered with sophistry.

*Euph.* Have you a mind to hear the same reasoning that led Alciphron and me step by step, that we may examine whether it be sophistry or no?

*Lys.* As to that I am very easy. I guess all that can be said on that head. It shall be my business to help my friend out, whatever arguments drew him in.

*Euph.* Will you admit the premises and deny the conclusions?

*Lys.* What if I admit the conclusion?

*Euph.* How! will you grant there is a God?

*Lys.* Perhaps I may.

*Euph.* Then we are agreed.

*Lys.* Perhaps not.

*Euph.* O Lysicles, you are a subtile adversary. I know not what you would be at.

*Lys.* You must know then that at bottom the being of a God is a point in itself of small consequence, and a man may make this concession without yielding much. The great point is what sense the word *God* is to be taken in. The very Epicureans allowed the being of gods; but then they were indolent gods, unconcerned with human affairs. Hobbes allowed a corporeal God: and Spinosa held the universe to be God. And yet nobody doubts they were staunch free-thinkers. I could wish indeed the word God were quite omitted; because in most minds it is coupled with a sort of superstitious awe, the very root of all religion. I shall not, nevertheless, be much disturbed, though the name be retained, and the being of a God allowed in any sense but in that of a Mind, which knows all things, and beholds human actions, like some judge or magistrate, with infinite observation and intelligence. The belief of a God in this sense fills a man's mind with scruples, lays him

Digitized by Google

under constraints, and embitters his very being: but in another sense it may be attended with no great ill consequence. This I know was the opinion of our great Diagoras, who told me he would never have been at the pains to find out a demonstration that there was no God, if the received notion of God had been the same with that of some Fathers and Schoolmen.

*Euph.* Pray what was that?

17. *Lys.* You must know, Diagoras, a man of much reading and inquiry, had discovered that once upon a time the most profound and speculative divines, finding it impossible to reconcile the attributes of God, taken in the common sense, or in any known sense, with human reason, and the appearances of things, taught that the words *knowledge*, *wisdom*, *goodness*, and such like, when spoken of the Deity, must be understood in a quite different sense from what they signify in the vulgar acceptation, or from anything that we can form a notion of or conceive. Hence, whatever objections might be made against the attributes of God they easily solved, by denying those attributes belonged to God, in this, or that, or any known particular sense or notion; which was the same thing as to deny they belonged to Him at all. And thus denying the attributes of God, they in effect denied His being, though perhaps they were not aware of it.

Suppose, for instance, a man should object that future contingencies were inconsistent with the Foreknowledge of God, because it is repugnant that certain knowledge should be of an uncertain thing: it was a ready and an easy answer to say that this may be true with respect to knowledge taken in the common sense, or in any sense that we can possibly form any notion of; but that there would not appear the same inconsistency between the contingent nature of things and Divine Foreknowledge, taken to signify somewhat that we know nothing of, which in God supplies the place of what we understand by knowledge; from which it differs not in quantity or degree of perfection, but altogether, and in kind, as light doth from sound; and even more, since these agree in that they are both sensations; whereas knowledge in God hath no sort of resemblance or agreement with any notion that man can frame of knowledge. The like may be said of

Digitized by Google

all the other attributes, which indeed may by this means be equally reconciled with everything or with nothing. But all men who think must needs see this is cutting knots and not untying them. For, how are things reconciled with the Divine attributes when these attributes themselves are in every intelligible sense denied; and, consequently, the very notion of God taken away, and nothing left but the name without any meaning annexed to it? In short, the belief that there is an unknown subject of attributes absolutely unknown is a very innocent doctrine; which the acute Diagoras well saw, and was therefore wonderfully delighted with this system.

18. For, said he, if this could once make its way and obtain in the world, there would be an end of all natural or rational religion, which is the basis both of the Jewish and the Christian: for he who comes to God, or enters himself in the church of God, must first believe that there is a God in some intelligible sense; and not only that there is *something in general*, without any proper notion, though never so inadequate, of any of its qualities or attributes: for this may be fate, or chaos, or plastic nature, or anything else as well as God. Nor will it avail to say there is something in this unknown being *analogous* to knowledge and goodness; that is to say, which produceth those effects which we could not conceive to be produced by men, in any degree, without knowledge and goodness. For, this is in fact to give up the point in dispute between theists and atheists, the question having always been, not whether there was a Principle (which point was allowed by all philosophers, as well before as since Anaxagoras), but whether this Principle was a νοῦς, a thinking intelligent being: that is to say, whether that order, and beauty, and use, visible in natural effects, could be produced by anything but a Mind or Intelligence, in the proper sense of the word? And whether there must not be true, real, and proper knowledge, in the First Cause? We will, therefore, acknowledge that all those natural effects which are vulgarly ascribed to knowledge and wisdom, proceed from a being in which there is, properly speaking, no knowledge or wisdom at all, but only something else, which in reality is the cause of those things which men, for want of knowing better, ascribe

Digitized by Google

to what they call knowledge and wisdom and understanding. You wonder perhaps to hear a man of pleasure, who diverts himself as I do, philosophize at this rate. But you should consider that much is to be got by conversing with ingenious men, which is a short way to knowledge, that saves a man the drudgery of reading and thinking.

And, now we have granted to you that there is a God in this indefinite sense, I would fain see what use you can make of this concession. You cannot argue from unknown attributes, or, which is the same thing, from attributes in an unknown sense. You cannot prove that God is to be loved for His goodness, or feared for His justice, or respected for His knowledge: all which consequences, we own, would follow from those attributes admitted in an intelligible sense. But we deny that those or any other consequences can be drawn from attributes admitted in no particular sense, or in a sense which none of us understand. Since, therefore, nothing can be inferred from such an account of God, about conscience, or worship, or religion, you may even make the best of it. And, not to be singular, we will use the name too, and so at once there is an end of atheism.

*Euph.* This account of a Deity is new to me. I do not like it, and therefore shall leave it to be maintained by those who do.

19. *Cri.* It is not new to me. I remember not long since to have heard a minute philosopher triumph upon this very point; which put me on inquiring what foundation there was for it in the Fathers or Schoolmen. And, for aught that I can find, it owes its original to those writings which have been published under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. The author of which, it must be owned, hath written upon the Divine attributes in a very singular style. In his treatise of the Celestial Hierarchy,[1] he saith that God is something above all essence and life, *ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν οὐσίαν καὶ ζωὴν*; and again, in his treatise of the Divine Names,[2] that He is above all wisdom and understanding, *ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν σοφίαν καὶ σύνεσιν*, *ineffable and innominable*, *ἄῤῥητος καὶ ἀμώνυμος*; the wisdom of God he terms an unreasonable, unintelligent, and foolish

[1] "De Hierarch. Cœlest.," cap. 2.
[2] "De Nom. Div.," cap. 7.

Digitized by Google

wisdom; *τὴν ἄλογον, καὶ ἄνουν, καὶ μωρὰν σοφίαν.* But then the reason he gives for expressing himself in this strange manner is, that the Divine wisdom is the cause of all reason, wisdom, and understanding, and therein are contained the treasures of all wisdom and knowledge. He calls God *ὑπέρσοφος* and *ὑπέρζως*; as if wisdom and life were words not worthy to express the Divine perfections: and he adds that the attributes unintelligent and unperceiving must be ascribed to the Divinity, not *κατ' ἔλλειψιν*, by way of defect, but *καθ' ὑπεροχήν*, by way of eminency; which he explains by our giving the name of darkness to light inaccessible. And, notwithstanding the harshness of his expressions in some places, he affirms over and over in others, that God knows all things; not that He is beholden to the creatures for His knowledge, but by knowing Himself, from whom they all derive their being, and in whom they are contained as in their cause. It was late before these writings appear to have been known in the world; and, although they obtained credit during the age of the Schoolmen, yet, since critical learning hath been cultivated, they have lost that credit, and are at this day given up for spurious, as containing several evident marks of a much later date than the age of Dionysius.[1] Upon the whole, although this method of growing in expression and dwindling in notion, of clearing up doubts by nonsense, and avoiding difficulties by running into affected contradictions, may perhaps proceed from a well-meant zeal, yet it appears not to be according to knowledge; and, instead of reconciling atheists to the truth, hath, I doubt, a tendency to confirm them in their own persuasion. It should seem, therefore, very weak and rash in a Christian to adopt this harsh language of an apocryphal writer preferably to that of the Holy Scriptures. I remember, indeed, to have read of a certain philosopher, who lived some centuries ago, that used to say, if these supposed works of Dionysius had been known to the primitive Fathers, they would have furnished them admirable weapons against the heretics, and would have saved a world of pains. But the event since their discovery hath by no means confirmed his opinion.

It must be owned, the celebrated Picus of Mirandula,

[1] About the middle of the fourth century. Dionysius was supposed to have been converted by St. Paul.—ED.

Digitized by Google

among his nine hundred conclusions (which that prince, being very young, proposed to maintain by public disputation at Rome), hath this for one—to wit, that it is more improper to say of God, He is an intellect or intelligent Being, than to say of a reasonable soul that it is an angel: which doctrine it seems was not relished. And Picus, when he comes to defend it, supports himself altogether by the example and authority of Dionysius, and in effect explains it away into a mere verbal difference, affirming that neither Dionysius nor himself ever meant to deprive God of knowledge, or to deny that He knows all things; but that, as reason is of kind peculiar to man, so by intellection he understands a kind or manner of knowing peculiar to angels; and that the knowledge which is in God is more above the intellection of angels than angel is above man. He adds that, as his tenet consists with admitting the most perfect knowledge in God, so he would by no means be understood to exclude from the Deity intellection itself, taken in the common or general sense, but only that peculiar sort of intellection proper to angels, which he thinks ought not to be attributed to God any more than human reason. Picus,[1] therefore, though he speaks as the apocryphal Dionysius, yet, when he explains himself, it is evident he speaks like other men. And, although the forementioned books of the Celestial Hierarchy and of the Divine Names, being attributed to a saint and martyr of the apostolical age, were respected by the Schoolmen, yet it is certain they rejected or softened his harsh expressions, and explained away or reduced his doctrine to the received notions taken from Holy Scripture and the light of nature.

20. Thomas Aquinas expresseth his sense of this point in the following manner. All perfections, saith he, derived from God to the creatures are in a certain higher sense, or (as the Schoolmen term it) eminently in God. Whenever, therefore, a name borrowed from any perfection in the creature is attributed to God, we must exclude from its signification everything that belongs to the imperfect manner wherein that attribute is found in the creature. Whence he concludes that knowledge in God is not a habit but a pure

[1] "Pic. Mirand. in Apolog.," p. 155, ed. Bas.

Digitized by Google

act.[1] And again, the same Doctor observes that our intellect gets its notions of all sorts of perfections from the creatures, and that as it apprehends those perfections so it signifies them by names. Therefore, saith he, in attributing these names to God we are to consider two things: first the perfections themselves, as goodness, life, and the like, which are properly in God; and secondly, the manner which is peculiar to the creature, and cannot, strictly and properly speaking, be said to agree to the Creator.[2]

And although Suarez, with other Schoolmen, teacheth that the mind of man conceiveth knowledge and will to be in God as faculties or operations, by analogy only to created beings, yet he gives it plainly as his opinion that when knowledge is said not to be properly in God it must be understood in a sense including imperfection, such as discursive knowledge, or the like imperfect kind found in the creatures: and that, none of those imperfections in the knowledge of men or angels belonging to[3] knowledge as such, it will not thence follow that knowledge, in its proper formal sense, may not be attributed to God. And of knowledge taken in general for the clear evident understanding of all truth, he expressly affirms that it is in God, and that this was never denied by any philosopher who believed a God.[4] It was, indeed, a current opinion in the schools that even Being itself should be attributed analogically to God and the creatures. That is, they held that God, the supreme, independent, self-originate cause and source of all beings, must not be supposed to *exist* in the same sense with created beings; not that He exists less truly, or properly than they, but only because He exists in a more eminent and perfect manner.

21. But, to prevent any man's being led, by mistaking the scholastic use of the terms *analogy* and *analogical*, into an opinion that we cannot frame in any degree a true and proper notion of attributes applied by analogy, or, in the school phrase, predicated analogically, it may not be amiss

[1] "Sum. Theolog.," p. i., quest. xiv., art. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, quest. xiii., art. 3.

[3] Here in first and second editions "the formal notion of knowledge or to knowledge as such," &c.—ED.

[4] Suarez, "Dis. Metaph.," tom. II., disp. xxx., sec. 15.

Digitized by Google

to inquire into the true sense and meaning of those words. Every one knows that *analogy* is a Greek word used by mathematicians to signify a similitude of proportions. For instance, when we observe that two is to six as three is to nine, this similitude or equality of proportion is termed analogy. And, although proportion strictly signifies the habitude or relation of one quantity to another, yet, in a looser and translated sense, it hath been applied to signify every other habitude; and consequently, the term analogy comes to signify all similitude of relations or habitudes whatsoever. Hence the Schoolmen tell us there is analogy between intellect and sight; forasmuch as intellect is to the mind what sight is to the body, and that he who governs the state is analogous to him who steers a ship. Hence a prince is analogically styled a pilot, being to the state as a pilot is to his vessel.[1]

For the further clearing of this point, it is to be observed that a twofold analogy is distinguished by the Schoolmen—metaphorical and proper. Of the first kind there are frequent instances in Holy Scripture, attributing human parts and passions to God. When He is represented as having a finger, an eye, or an ear; when He is said to repent, to be angry, or grieved; every one sees that analogy is metaphorical. Because those parts and passions, taken in the proper signification, must in every degree necessarily, and from the formal nature of the thing, include imperfection. When, therefore, it is said the finger of God appears in this or that event, men of common sense mean no more but that it is as truly ascribed to God as the works wrought by human fingers are to man: and so of the rest. But the case is different when wisdom and knowledge are attributed to God. Passions and senses, as such, imply defect; but in knowledge simply, or as such, there is no defect. Knowledge, therefore, in the proper formal meaning of the word, may be attributed to God proportionably, that is, preserving a proportion to the infinite nature of God. We may say, therefore, that as God is infinitely above man, so is the knowledge of God infinitely above the knowledge of man, and this is what Cajetan calls *analogia proprie facta*. And after this same

[1] *Vide* "Cajetan. de Nom. Analog.," cap. 3.



Digitized by Google

analogy we must understand all those attributes to belong to the Deity which in themselves simply, and as such, denote perfection. We may, therefore, consistently with what hath been premised, affirm that all sorts of perfection which we can conceive in a finite spirit are in God, but without any of that allay which is found in the creatures. This doctrine, therefore, of analogical perfections in God, or our knowing God by analogy, seems very much misunderstood and misapplied by those who would infer from thence that we cannot frame any direct or proper notion, though never so inadequate, of knowledge or wisdom, as they are in the Deity; or understand any more of them than one born blind can of light and colours.

22. And now, gentlemen, it may be expected I should ask your pardon for having dwelt so long on a point of metaphysics, and introduced such unpolished and unfashionable writers as the Schoolmen into good company: but, as Lysicles gave the occasion, I leave him to answer for it.

*Lys.* I never dreamt of this dry dissertation. But, if I have been the occasion of discussing these scholastic points, by my unlucky mentioning the Schoolmen, it was my first fault of the kind, and I promise it shall be the last. The meddling with crabbed authors of any sort is none of my taste. I grant one meets now and then with a good notion in what we call dry writers, such a one for example as this I was speaking of, which I must own struck my fancy. But then, for these we have such as Prodicus or Diagoras, who look into obsolete books, and save the rest of us that trouble.

*Cri.* So you pin your faith upon them?

*Lys.* It is only for some odd opinions, and matters of fact, and critical points. Besides, we know the men to whom we give credit: they are judicious and honest, and have no end to serve but truth. And I am confident some author or other has maintained the forementioned notion in the same sense as Diagoras related it.

*Cri.* That may be. But it never was a received notion, and never will, so long as men believe a God: the same arguments that prove a first cause proving an intelligent cause; intelligent, I say, in the proper sense; wise and good in the true and formal acceptation of the words. Otherwise,

Digitized by Google

it is evident that every syllogism brought to prove those attributes, or, which is the same thing, to prove the being of a God, will be found to consist of four terms, and consequently can conclude nothing. But for your part, Alciphron, you have been fully convinced that God is a thinking intelligent being, in the same sense with other spirits; though not in the same imperfect manner or degree.

23. *Alc.* And yet I am not without my scruples: for, with knowledge you infer wisdom, and with wisdom goodness. Though I cannot see that it is either wise or good to enact such laws as can never be obeyed.

*Cri.* Doth any one find fault with the exactness of geometrical rules, because no one in practice can attain to it? The perfection of a rule is useful, even though it is not reached. Many approach what all may fall short of.[1]

*Alc.* But how is it possible to conceive God so good and man so wicked? It may, perhaps, with some colour be alleged that a little soft shadowing of evil sets off the bright and luminous parts of the creation, and so contributes to the beauty of the whole piece; but for blots so large and so black it is impossible to account by that principle. That there should be so much vice, and so little virtue upon earth, and that the laws of God's kingdom should be so ill observed by His subjects, is what can never be reconciled with that surpassing wisdom and goodness of the supreme Monarch.

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, would you argue that a state was ill administered, or judge of the manners of its citizens, by the disorders committed in the jail or dungeon?

*Alc.* I would not.

*Euph.* And, for aught we know, this spot, with the few sinners on it, bears no greater proportion to the universe of intelligences than a dungeon doth to a kingdom. It seems we are led not only by revelation, but by common sense, observing and inferring from the analogy of visible things, to conclude there are innumerable orders of intelligent beings more happy and more perfect than man; whose life is but a span, and whose place, this earthly globe, is but a point, in respect of the whole system of God's creation. We are

[1] From "Though I cannot . . ." to this point (6 lines), was added to the second edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

dazzled, indeed, with the glory and grandeur of things here below, because we know no better. But, I am apt to think, if we knew what it was to be an angel for one hour, we should return to this world, though it were to sit on the brightest throne in it, with vastly more loathing and reluctance than we would now descend into a loathsome dungeon or sepulchre.

24. *Cri.* To me it seems natural that such a weak, passionate, and short-sighted creature as man should be ever liable to scruples of one kind or other. But, as this same creature is apt to be over-positive in judging, and over-hasty in concluding, it falls out that these difficulties and scruples about God's conduct are made objections to His being. And so men come to argue from their own defects against the Divine perfections. And, as the views and humours of men are different and often opposite, you may sometimes see them deduce the same atheistical conclusions from contrary premises. I knew an instance of this in two minute philosophers of my acquaintance, who used to argue each from his own temper against a Providence. One of them, a man of a choleric and vindictive spirit, said he could not believe a Providence, because London was not swallowed up or consumed by fire from heaven; the streets being, as he said, full of people who shew no other belief or worship of God but perpetually praying that He would damn, rot, sink, and confound them. The other, being of an indolent easy temper, concluded there could be no such thing as Providence; for that a being of consummate wisdom must needs employ himself better than in minding the prayers and actions and little interests of mankind.

*Alc.* After all, if God have no passions, how can it be true that vengeance is His? Or how can He be said to be jealous of His glory?

*Cri.* We believe that God executes vengeance without revenge, and is jealous without weakness, just as the mind of man sees without eyes, and apprehends without hands.

25. *Alc.* To put a period to this discourse, we will grant there is a God in this dispassionate sense: but what then? What hath this to do with Religion or Divine worship? To

Digitized by Google

what purpose are all these prayers, and praises, and thanksgivings, and singing of psalms, which the foolish vulgar call serving God? What sense, or use, or end is there in all these things?

*Cri.* We worship God, we praise and pray to Him: not because we think that He is proud of our worship, or fond of our praise or prayers, and affected with them as mankind are; or that all our service can contribute in the least degree to His happiness or good; but because it is good for us to be so disposed towards God: because it is just and right, and suitable to the nature of things, and becoming the relation we stand in to our supreme Lord and Governor.

*Alc.* If it be good for us to worship God, it should seem that the Christian Religion, which pretends to teach men the knowledge and worship of God, was of some use and benefit to mankind.

*Cri.* Doubtless.

*Alc.* If this can be made appear, I shall own myself very much mistaken.

*Cri.* It is now near dinner-time. Wherefore, if you please, we will put an end to this conversation for the present, and to-morrow morning resume our subject.

Digitized by Google

# THE FIFTH DIALOGUE.[1]

1. Minute philosophers join in the cry, and follow the scent, of others. 2. Worship prescribed by the Christian religion suitable to God and man. 3. Power and influence of the Druids. 4. Excellency and usefulness of the Christian religion. 5. It ennobles mankind, and makes them happy. 6. Religion neither bigotry nor superstition. 7. Physicians and physic for the soul. 8. Character of the clergy. 9. Natural religion and human reason not to be disparaged. 10. Tendency and use of the Gentile religion. 11. Good effects of Christianity. 12. Englishmen compared with ancient Greeks and Romans. 13. The modern practice of duelling. 14. Character of the old Romans, how to be formed. 15. Genuine fruits of the Gospel. 16. Wars and factions not an effect of the Christian religion. 17. Civil rage and massacres in Greece and Rome. 18. Virtue of the ancient Greeks. 19. Quarrels of polemical divines. 20. Tyranny, usurpation, and sophistry of Ecclesiastics. 21. The universities censured. 22. Divine writings of a certain modern critic. 23. Learning the effect of religion. 24. Barbarism of the schools. 25. Restoration of learning and polite arts, to whom owing. 26. Prejudice and ingratitude of minute philosophers. 27. Their pretensions and conduct inconsistent. 28. Men and brutes compared with respect to religion. 29. Christianity the only means to establish natural religion. 30. Free-thinkers mistake their talents; have a strong imagination. 31. Tithes and church-lands. 32. Men distinguished from human creatures. 33. Distribution of mankind into birds, beasts, and fishes. 34. Plea for reason allowed, but unfairness taxed. 35. Freedom a blessing, or a curse, as it is used. 36. Priestcraft not the reigning evil.

I.

WE amused ourselves next day every one to his fancy till nine of the clock, when word was brought that the tea-table was set in the library, which is a gallery on the

[1] The existence of God having been granted, the discussion now deals with the use and excellence of the Christian religion. The inferiority of Christianity to other systems in its practical results was extensively advanced about this time. See particularly Matthew Tindal's "Christianity as old as the Creation, or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature" (1730).—ED.

Digitized by Google

ground floor, with an arched door at one end opening into a walk of limes; where, as soon as we had drunk tea, we were tempted by fine weather to take a walk which led us to a small mount of easy ascent, on the top whereof we found a seat under a spreading tree. Here we had a prospect on one hand of a narrow bay or creek of the sea, enclosed on either side by a coast beautified with rocks and woods, and green banks and farm-houses. At the end of the bay was a small town, placed upon the slope of a hill, which, from the advantage of its situation made a considerable figure. Several fishing-boats and lighters, gliding up and down on a surface as smooth and bright as glass, enlivened the prospect. On the other hand, we looked down on green pastures, flocks, and herds basking beneath in sunshine, while we, in our superior situation, enjoyed the freshness of air and shade.[1]

Here we felt that sort of joyful instinct which a rural scene and fine weather inspire; and proposed no small pleasure in resuming and continuing our conference without interruption till dinner. But we had hardly seated ourselves and looked about us when we saw a fox run by the foot of our mount into an adjacent thicket. A few minutes after, we heard a confused noise of the opening of hounds, and winding of horns, and the roaring of country squires. While our attention was suspended by this event, a servant came running, out of breath, and told Crito that his neighbour Ctesippus, a squire of note, was fallen from his horse, attempting to leap over a hedge, and brought into the hall, where he lay for dead. Upon which we all rose, and walked hastily to the house, where we found Ctesippus just come to himself, in the midst of half-a-dozen sun-burnt squires, in frocks, and short wigs, and jockey-boots. Being asked how he did, he answered it was only a broken rib. With some difficulty Crito persuaded him to lie on a bed till the chirurgeon came. These fox-hunters, having been up early at their sport, were eager for dinner, which was accordingly hastened. They passed the afternoon in a loud rustic mirth, gave proof of their religion and loyalty by the healths they drank, talked of hounds, and horses, and elections, and

[1] A beautiful sketch of Newport and Narragansett Bay, as seen from Honeyman's Hill. (Fraser's Life, p. 168.)—ED.

Digitized by Google

country affairs, till the chirurgeon, who had been employed about Ctesippus, desired he might be put into Crito's coach, and sent home, having refused to stay all night.

Our guests being gone, we reposed ourselves after the fatigue of this tumultuous visit, and next morning assembled again at the seat on the mount.

Now Lysicles, being a nice man and a *bel esprit*, had an infinite contempt for the rough manners and conversation of fox-hunters, and could not reflect with patience that he had lost, as he called it, so many hours in their company. I flattered myself, said he, that there had been none of this species remaining among us: strange that men should be diverted with such uncouth noise and hurry, or find pleasure in the society of dogs and horses! How much more elegant are the diversions of the town!

There seems, replied Euphranor, to be some resemblance between fox-hunters and free-thinkers; the former exerting their animal faculties in pursuit of game, as you gentlemen employ your intellectuals in the pursuit of truth. The kind of amusement is the same, although the object be different.

*Lys.* I had rather be compared to any brute upon earth than a rational brute.

*Cri.* You would then have been less displeased with my friend Pythocles, whom I have heard compare the common sort of minute philosophers not to the hunters but the hounds. For, said he, you shall often see among the dogs a loud babbler, with a bad nose, lead the unskilful part of the pack, who join all in his cry without following any scent of their own, any more than the herd of free-thinkers follow their own reason.

2. But Pythocles was a blunt man, and must never have known such reasoners among them as you gentlemen, who can sit so long at an argument, dispute every inch of ground, and yet know when to make a reasonable concession.

*Lys.* I do not know how it comes to pass, but methinks Alciphron makes concessions for himself and me too. For my own part, I am not altogether of such a yielding temper; but yet I do not care to be singular neither.

*Cri.* Truly, Alciphron, when I consider where we are got, and how far we are agreed, I conceive it probable we may

Digitized by Google

agree altogether in the end. You have granted that a life of virtue is upon all accounts eligible, as most conducive both to the general and particular good of mankind; and you allow that the beauty of virtue alone is not a sufficient motive with mankind to the practice of it. This led you to acknowledge that the belief of a God would be very useful in the world; and that, consequently, you should be disposed to admit any reasonable proof of His being: which point hath been proved, and you have admitted the proof.

If then we admit a Divinity, why not Divine worship? And if worship, why not religion to teach this worship? And if a religion, why not the Christian, if a better cannot be assigned, and it be already established by the laws of our country, and handed down to us from our forefathers? Shall we believe a God, and not pray to him for future benefits, nor thank him for the past? Neither trust in his protection, nor love his goodness, nor praise his wisdom, nor adore his power? And if these things are to be done, can we do them in a way more suitable to the dignity of God or man than is prescribed by the Christian religion?

*Alc.* I am not, perhaps, altogether sure that religion must be absolutely bad for the public: but I cannot bear to see policy and religion walk hand in hand. I do not like to see human rights attached to the Divine. I am for no *pontifex maximus*, such as in ancient or in modern Rome; no high-priest, as in Judea; no royal priests, as in Egypt and Sparta; no such things as Dairos of Japan, or Lamas of Tartary.

3. I knew a late witty gentleman of our sect who was a great admirer of the ancient Druids. He had a mortal antipathy to the present established religion, but used to say he should like well to see the Druids and their religion restored, as it anciently flourished in Gaul and Britain; for, it would be right enough that there should be a number of contemplative men set apart to preserve a knowledge of arts and sciences, to educate youth, and teach men the immortality of the soul and the moral virtues. Such, said he, were the Druids of old, and I should be glad to see them once more established among us.[1]

[1] This apparently refers to Toland, who died in 1722, and whose "A Specimen of the Critical History of the Celtic Religion . . . containing

Digitized by Google

*Cri.* How would you like, Alciphron, that priests should have power to decide all controversies, and adjudge property, distribute rewards and punishments; that all who did not acquiesce in their decrees should be excommunicated, held in abhorrence, excluded from all honours and privileges, and deprived of the common benefit of the laws; and that now and then a number of laymen should be crammed together in a wicker-idol, and burnt for an offering to their pagan gods? How should you like living under such priests and such a religion?

*Alc.* Not at all. Such a situation would by no means agree with free-thinkers.

*Cri.* And yet such were the Druids and such their religion, if we may trust Cæsar's account of them.[1]

*Lys.* I am now convinced more than ever there ought to be no such thing as an established religion of any kind. Certainly all the nations of the world have been hitherto out of their wits. Even the Athenians themselves, the wisest and freest people upon earth, had I know not what foolish attachment to their established church. They offered, it seems, a talent as a reward to whoever should kill Diagoras the Melian, a free-thinker of those times, who derided their mysteries: and Protagoras, another of the same turn, narrowly escaped being put to death, for having wrote something that seemed to contradict their received notions of the gods. Such was the treatment our generous sect met with at Athens. And I make no doubt that these Druids would have sacrificed many a holocaust of free-thinkers. I would not give a single farthing to exchange one religion for another. Away with all together, root and branch, or you had as good do nothing. No Druids or priests of any sort for me: I see no occasion for any of them.

4. *Euph.* What Lysicles saith puts me in mind of the close of our last conference, wherein it was agreed in the following to resume the point we were then entered upon: to wit, the use or benefit of the Christian religion, which Alciphron expected Crito should make appear.

an account of the Druids, &c.," was first published in the two volumes of his posthumous pieces (1726). See pp. 10-12 of that edition.—Ed.

[1] "De Bello Gallico," lib. vi., 16.

Digitized by Google

*Cri.* I am the readier to undertake this point, because I conceive it to be no difficult one, and that one great mark of the truth of Christianity is, in my mind, its tendency to do good, which seems the north star to conduct our judgment in moral matters, and in all things of a practic nature; moral or practical truths being ever connected with universal benefit. But, to judge rightly of this matter, we should endeavour to act like Lysicles upon another occasion, taking into our view the sum of things, and considering principles as branched forth into consequences to the utmost extent we are able. We are not so much to regard the humour, or caprice, or imaginary distresses of a few idle men, whose conceit may be offended though their conscience cannot be wounded; but fairly to consider the true interest of individuals, as well as of human society. Now, the Christian religion, considered as a fountain of light, and joy, and peace; as a source of faith, and hope, and charity (and that it is so will be evident to whoever takes his notion of it from the gospel), must needs be a principle of happiness and virtue. And he who sees not that the destroying the principles of good actions must destroy good actions sees nothing: and he who, seeing this, shall yet persist to do it, if he be not wicked, who is?

5. To me it seems the man can see neither deep nor far, who is not sensible of his own misery, sinfulness, and dependence; who doth not perceive that this present world is not designed or adapted to make rational souls happy; who would not be glad of getting into a better state; and who would not be overjoyed to find that the road leading thither was the love of God and man, the practising every virtue, the living reasonably while we are here upon earth, proportioning our esteem to the value of things, and so using this world as not to abuse it. For this is what Christianity requires. It neither enjoins the nastiness of the Cynic, nor the insensibility of the Stoic. Can there be a higher ambition than to overcome the world, or a wiser than to subdue ourselves, or a more comfortable doctrine than the remission of sins, or a more joyful prospect than that of having our base nature renewed and assimilated to the Deity, our being made fellow-citizens with angels, and sons of God? Did ever Pytha-

Digitized by Google

goreans, or Platonists, or Stoics, even in idea or in wish, propose to the mind of man purer means, or a nobler end? How great a share of our happiness depends upon hope! How totally is this extinguished by the minute philosophy! On the other hand, how is it cherished and raised by the gospel! Let any man who thinks in earnest but consider these things, and then say which he thinks deserveth best of mankind—he who recommends, or he who runs down Christianity? Which he thinks likelier to lead a happy life, to be a hopeful son, an honest dealer, a worthy patriot—he who sincerely believes the gospel, or he who believes not one tittle of it? He who aims at being a child of God, or he who is contented to be thought, and to be, one of Epicurus's hogs? And, in fact, do but scan the characters, and observe the behaviour of the common sort of men on both sides: observe, and say which live most agreeably to the dictates of reason? How things should be, the reason is plain; how they are, I appeal to fact.

6. *Alc.* It is wonderful to observe how things change appearance, as they are viewed in different lights, or by different eyes. The picture, Crito, that I form of religion is very unlike yours, when I consider how it unmans the soul, filling it with absurd reveries, and slavish fears; how it extinguishes the gentle passions, inspiring a spirit of malice, and rage, and persecution; when I behold bitter resentments and unholy wrath in those very men who preach up meekness and charity to others.

*Cri.* It is very possible that gentlemen of your sect may think religion a subject beneath their attention; but yet it seems that whoever sets up for opposing any doctrine should know what it is he disputes against. Know, then, that religion is the virtuous mean between incredulity and superstition. We do not therefore contend for superstitious follies, or for the rage of bigots. What we plead for is, religion against profaneness, law against confusion, virtue against vice, the hope of a Christian against the despondency of an atheist. I will not justify bitter resentments and unholy wrath in any man, much less in a Christian, and least of all in a clergyman. But, if sallies of human passion should sometimes appear even in the best, it will not surprise any

Digitized by Google

one who reflects on the sarcasms and ill manners with which they are treated by the minute philosophers. For, as Cicero somewhere observes, *Habet quendam aculeum contumelia, quem pati prudentes ac viri boni difficillime possunt.* But, although you might sometimes observe particular persons, professing themselves Christians, run into faulty extremes of any kind, through passion and infirmity, while infidels of a more calm and dispassionate temper shall perhaps behave better; yet these natural tendencies on either side prove nothing, either in favour of infidel principles, or against Christian. If a believer doth evil, it is owing to the man, not to his belief. And if an infidel doth good, it is owing to the man, and not to his infidelity.

7. *Lys.* To cut this matter short, I shall borrow an allusion to physic, which one of you made use of against our sect. It will not be denied that the clergy pass for physicians of the soul, and that religion is a sort of medicine which they deal in and administer. If then souls in great numbers are diseased and lost, how can we think the physician skilful, or his physic good? It is a common complaint that vice increases, and men grow daily more and more wicked. If a shepherd's flock be diseased or unsound, who is to blame but the shepherd, for neglecting, or not knowing how to cure them? A fig therefore for such shepherds, such physic, and such physicians, who, like other mountebanks, with great gravity, and elaborate harangues, put off their pills to the people, who are never the better for them.

*Euph.* Nothing seems more reasonable than this remark, that men should judge of a physician and his physic by its effect on the sick. But pray, Lysicles, would you judge of a physician by those sick who take his physic, and follow his prescriptions, or by those who do not?

*Lys.* Doubtless by those who do.

*Euph.* What shall we say then, if great numbers refuse to take the physic, or instead of it take poison of a direct contrary nature, prescribed by others, who make it their business to discredit the physician and his medicines, to hinder men from using them, and to destroy their effect by drugs of their own? Shall the physician be blamed for the miscarriage of those people?

Digitized by Google

*Lys.* By no means.

*Euph.* By a parity of reason, should it not follow that the tendency of religious doctrines ought to be judged of by the effects which they produce, not upon all who hear them, but upon those only who receive or believe them?

*Lys.* It seems so.

*Euph.* Therefore, to proceed fairly, shall we not judge of the effects of religion by the religious, of faith by believers, of Christianity by Christians?

8. *Lys.* But I doubt these sincere believers are very few.

*Euph.* But will it not suffice to justify our principles, if, in proportion to the numbers which receive them, and the degree of faith with which they are received, they produce good effects? Perhaps the number of believers are not so few as you imagine; and if they were, whose fault is that so much as of those who make it their professed endeavour to lessen that number? And who are those but the minute philosophers?

*Lys.* I tell you it is owing to the clergy themselves, to the wickedness and corruption of clergymen.

*Euph.* And who denies but there may be minute philosophers even among the clergy?

*Cri.* In so numerous a body it is to be presumed there are men of all sorts. But, notwithstanding the cruel reproaches cast upon that order by their enemies, an equal observer of men and things will, if I mistake not, be inclined to think those reproaches owing as much to other faults as those of the clergy; especially if he considers the declamatory manner of those who censure them.

*Euph.* My knowledge of the world is too narrow for me to pretend to judge of the virtue, and merit, and liberal attainments of men in the several professions. Besides, I should not care for the odious work of comparison. But I may venture to say the clergy of this country where I live are by no means a disgrace to it; on the contrary, the people seem much the better for their example and doctrine. But supposing the clergy to be (what all men certainly are) sinners and faulty; supposing you might spy out here and there among them even great crimes and vices, what can you conclude against the profession itself from its unworthy pro-

Digitized by Google

fessors, any more than from the pride, pedantry, and bad lives of some philosophers against philosophy, or of lawyers against law?

9. *Cri.* It is certainly right to judge of principles from their effects; but then we must know them to be effects of those principles. It is the very method I have observed with respect to religion and the minute philosophy. And I can honestly aver that I never knew any man or family grow worse in proportion as they grew religious: but I have often observed that minute philosophy is the worst thing that can get into a family, the readiest way to impoverish, divide, and disgrace it.[1]

*Alc.* By the same method of tracing causes from their effects, I have made it my observation that the love of truth, virtue, and the happiness of mankind are specious pretexts, but not the inward principles that set divines at work: else why should they affect to abuse human reason, to disparage natural religion, to traduce the philosophers, as they universally do?

*Cri.* Not so universally perhaps as you imagine. A Christian, indeed, is for confining reason within its due bounds; and so is every reasonable man. If we are forbid meddling with unprofitable questions, vain philosophy, and science falsely so called, it cannot be thence inferred that all inquiries into profitable questions, useful philosophy, and true science are unlawful. A minute philosopher may indeed impute, and perhaps a weak brother may imagine, those inferences, but men of sense will never make them. God is the common father of lights; and all knowledge really such, whether natural or revealed, is derived from the same source of light and truth. To amass together authorities upon so plain a point would be needless. It must be owned some men's attributing too much to human reason hath, as is natural, made others attribute too little to it. But thus much is generally acknowledged, that there is a natural religion, which may be discovered and proved by the light of reason, to those who are capable of such proofs. But it must be withal acknowledged that precepts and oracles from

[1] In all editions previous to the last, this speech is a continuation of Euphranor's.—ED.

Digitized by Google

heaven are incomparably better suited to popular improvement and the good of society than the reasonings of philosophers; and, accordingly, we do not find that natural or rational religion, as such, ever became the popular national religion of any country.

10. *Alc.* It cannot be denied that in all heathen countries there have been received, under the colour of religion, a world of fables and superstitious rites. But I question whether they were so absurd and of so bad influence as is vulgarly represented, since their respective legislators and magistrates must, without doubt, have thought them useful.

*Cri.* It were needless to inquire into all the rites and notions of the Gentile world. This hath been largely done when it was thought necessary. And whoever thinks it worth while may be easily satisfied about them. But as to the tendency and usefulness of the heathen religion in general, I beg leave to mention a remark of St. Augustine's,[1] who observes that the heathens in their religion had no assemblies for preaching, wherein the people were to be instructed what duties or virtues the gods required, no place or means to be taught what Persius[2] exhorts them to learn:

> Disciteque ô miseri, et causas cognoscite rerum,
> Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur.

*Alc.* This is the true spirit of the party, never to allow a grain of use or goodness to anything out of their own pale; but we have had learned men who have done justice to the religion of the Gentiles.

*Cri.* We do not deny but there was something useful in the old religions of Rome and Greece, and some other pagan countries. On the contrary, we freely own they produce some good effects on the people. But then these good effects were owing to the truths contained in those false religions: the truer therefore the more useful. I believe you will find it a hard matter to produce any useful truth, any moral precept, any salutary principle or notion in any Gentile system, either of religion or philosophy, which is not

[1] "De Civitate Dei," lib. ii. [2] "Sat.," iii.

Digitized by Google

comprehended in the Christian, and either enforced by stronger motives, or supported by better authority, or carried to a higher point of perfection.

11. *Alc.* Consequently you would have us think ourselves a finer people than the ancient Greeks or Romans.

*Cri.* If by finer you mean better, perhaps we are; and if we are not, it is not owing to the Christian religion, but to the want of it.

*Alc.* You say "perhaps we are." I do not pique myself on my reading: but should be very ignorant to be capable of being imposed on in so plain a point. What! compare Cicero or Brutus to an English patriot, or Seneca to one of our parsons! Then that invincible constancy and vigour of mind, that disinterested and noble virtue, that adorable public spirit you so much admire, are things in them so well known, and so different from our manners, that I know not how to excuse your *perhaps*. Euphranor, indeed, who passeth his life in this obscure corner, may possibly mistake the characters of our times, but you who know the world, how could you be guilty of such a mistake?

*Cri.* O Alciphron, I would by no means detract from the noble virtue of ancient heroes. But I observe those great men were not the minute philosophers of their times; that the best principles upon which they acted are common to them with Christians, of whom it would be no difficult matter to assign, if not in our own times, yet within the compass of our own history, many instances in every kind of worth and virtue, public or private, equal to the most celebrated of the ancients. Though perhaps their story might not have been so well told, set off with such fine lights and colourings of style, or so vulgarly known and considered by every schoolboy. But though it should be granted that here and there a Greek or Roman genius, bred up under strict laws and severe discipline, animated to public virtue by statues, crowns, triumphal arches, and such rewards and monuments of great actions, might attain to a character and fame beyond other men; yet this will prove only that they had more spirit, and lived under a civil polity more wisely ordered in certain points than ours; which advantages of nature and civil institution will be no argument for their



Digitized by Google

religion, or against ours. On the contrary, it seems an invincible proof of the power and excellency of the Christian religion that, without the help of those civil institutions and incentives to glory, it should be able to inspire a phlegmatic people with the noblest sentiments, and soften the rugged manners of northern boors into gentleness and humanity; and that these good qualities should become national, and rise and fall in proportion to the purity of our religion, as it approaches to, or recedes from, the plan laid down in the gospel.[1]

12. To make a right judgment of the effects of the Christian religion, let us take a survey of the prevailing notions and manners of this very country where we live, and compare them with those of our heathen predecessors.

*Alc.* I have heard much of the glorious light of the gospel, and should be glad to see some effects of it in my own dear country, which, by the bye, is one of the most corrupt and profligate upon earth, notwithstanding the boasted purity of our religion. But it would look mean and diffident to affect a comparison with the barbarous heathen from whence we drew our original. If you would do honour to your religion, dare to make it with the most renowned heathens of antiquity.

*Cri.* It is a common prejudice to despise the present, and over-rate remote times and things. Something of this seems to enter into the judgments men make of the Greeks and Romans. For, though it must be allowed those nations produced some noble spirits, and great patterns of virtue, yet, upon the whole, it seems to me they were much inferior, in point of real virtue and good morals, even to this corrupt and profligate nation, as you are now pleased to call it in dishonour to our religion; however you may think fit to characterize it when you would do honour to the minute philosophy. This, I think, will be plain to any one who shall turn off his eyes from a few shining characters, to view the general manners and customs of those people. Their insolent treatment of captives, even of the highest rank and

[1] For a comparison between the Romans and modern Christians—unfavourable to the latter—see Tindal's "Christianity as old as the Creation," p. 404.—ED.

Digitized by Google

softer sex, their unnatural exposing of their own children, their bloody gladiatorian spectacles, compared with the common notions of Englishmen, are to me a plain proof that our minds are much softened by Christianity. Could anything be more unjust than the condemning a young lady to the most infamous punishment and death for the guilt of her father, or a whole family of slaves, perhaps some hundreds, for a crime committed by one? Or more abominable than their bacchanals and unbridled lusts of every kind? which, notwithstanding all that has been done by minute philosophers to debauch the nation, and their successful attempts on some parts of it, have not yet been matched among us, at least not in every circumstance of impudence and effrontery. While the Romans were poor they were temperate; but, as they grew rich, they became luxurious to a degree that is hardly believed or conceived by us. It cannot be denied the old Roman spirit was a great one. But it is as certain there have been numberless examples of the most resolute and clear courage in Britons, and in general from a religious cause. Upon the whole, it seems an instance of the greatest blindness and ingratitude that we do not see and own the exceeding great benefits of Christianity, which, to omit higher considerations, hath so visibly softened, polished, and embellished our manners.

13. *Alc.* O Crito! we are alarmed at cruelty in a foreign shape, but overlook it in a familiar one. Else how is it possible that you should not see the inhumanity of that barbarous custom of duelling, a thing avowed, and tolerated, and even reputable among us? Or that, seeing this, you should suppose our Englishmen of a more gentle disposition than the old Romans, who were altogether strangers to it?

*Cri.* I will by no means make an apology for every Goth that walks the streets, with a determined purpose to murder any man who shall but spit in his face, or give him the lie. Nor do I think the Christian religion is in the least answerable for a practice so directly opposite to its precepts, and which obtains only among the idle part of the nation, your men of fashion; who, instead of law, reason, or religion, are governed by fashion. Be pleased to consider that what may be, and truly is, a most scandalous reproach to a Christian

Digitized by Google

country, may be none at all to the Christian religion: for the Pagan encouraged men in several vices, but the Christian in none.

*Alc.* Give me leave to observe that what you now say is foreign to the purpose. For, the question, at present, is not concerning the respective tendencies of the Pagan and the Christian religions, but concerning our manners, as actually compared with those of ancient heathens, who, I aver, had no such barbarous custom as duelling.

*Cri.* And I aver that, bad as this is, they had a worse: and that was poisoning. By which we have reason to think there were many more lives destroyed than by this Gothic crime of duelling: inasmuch as it extended to all ages, sexes, and characters, and as its effects were more secret and unavoidable; and as it had more temptations, interest as well as passion, to recommend it to wicked men. And for the fact, not to waste time, I refer you to the Roman authors themselves.

*Lys.* It is very true. Duelling is not so general a nuisance as poisoning, nor of so base a nature. This crime, if it be a crime, is in a fair way to keep its ground in spite of the law and the gospel. The clergy never preach against it, because themselves never suffer by it: and the man of honour must not appear against the means of vindicating honour.

*Cri.* Though it be remarked by some of your sect, that the clergy are not used to preach against duelling, yet I neither think the remark itself just, nor the reason assigned for it. In effect, one half of their sermons, all that is said of charity, brotherly love, forbearance, meekness, and forgiving injuries, is directly against this wicked custom; by which the clergy themselves are so far from never suffering, that perhaps they will be found, all things considered, to suffer oftener than other men.

*Lys.* How do you make this appear?

*Cri.* An observer of mankind may remark two kinds of bully, the fighting and the tame, both public nuisances; the former (who is the more dangerous animal, but by much the less common of the two) employs himself wholly and solely against the laity, while the tame species exert their talents upon the clergy. The qualities constituent of this tame bully

Digitized by Google

are natural rudeness joined with a delicate sense of danger. For, you must know, the force of inbred insolence and ill manners is not diminished, though it acquire a new determination, from the fashionable custom of calling men to account for their behaviour. Hence you may often see one of these tame bullies ready to burst with pride and ill-humour, which he dares not vent, till a parson has come in the way to his relief. And the man of raillery, who would as soon bite off his tongue as break a jest on the profession of arms in the presence of a military man, shall instantly brighten up, and assume a familiar air with religion and the church before ecclesiastics. Dorcon, who passeth for a poltroon and stupid in all other company, and really is so, when he is got among clergymen affects a quite opposite character. And many Dorcons there are, who owe their wit and courage to this passive order.

14. *Alc.* But to return to the point in hand, can you deny the old Romans were as famous for justice and integrity as men in these days for the contrary qualities?

*Cri.* The character of the Romans is not to be taken from the sentiments of Tully, or Cato's actions, or a shining passage here and there in their history, but from the prevailing tenor of their lives and notions. Now, if they and our modern Britons were weighed in this same equal balance, you will, if I mistake not, appear to have been prejudiced in favour of the old Romans against your own country: probably because it professeth Christianity. Whatever instances of fraud or injustice may be seen in Christians carry their own censure with them, in the care that is taken to conceal them, and the shame that attends their discovery. There is, even at this day, a sort of modesty in all our public councils and deliberations. And I believe the boldest of our minute philosophers would hardly undertake, in a popular assembly, to propose anything parallel to the rape of the Sabines, the most unjust usage of Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus, or the ungrateful treatment of Camillus; which, as a learned father observes, were instances of iniquity agreed to by the public body of the Romans. And if Rome in her early days were capable of such flagrant injustice, it is most certain she did not mend her manners as she grew great in wealth and

Digitized by Google

empire, having produced monsters in every kind of wickedness, as far exceeding other men as they surpassed them in power. I freely acknowledge the Christian religion hath not had the same influence upon the nation that it would in case it had been always professed in its purity, and cordially believed by all men. But I will venture to say that if you take the Roman history from one end to the other, and impartially compare it with your own, you will neither find them so good, nor your countrymen so bad, as you imagine. On the contrary, an indifferent eye may, I verily think, perceive a vein of charity and justice, the effect of Christian principles, run through the latter; which, though not equally discernible in all parts, yet discloseth itself sufficiently to make a wide difference upon the whole, in spite of the general appetites and passions of human nature, as well as of the particular hardness and roughness of the block out of which we were hewn. And it is observable (what the Roman authors themselves do often suggest) that even their virtues and magnanimous actions rose and fell with a sense of Providence and a future state, and a philosophy the nearest to the Christian religion.

15. Crito having spoken thus paused.

But Alciphron, addressing himself to Euphranor and me, said, It is natural for men, according to their several educations and prejudices, to form contrary judgments upon the same things, which they view in very different lights. Crito, for instance, imagines that none but salutary effects proceed from religion: on the other hand, if you appeal to the general experience and observation of other men, you shall find it grown into a proverb that religion is the root of evil:

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

And this not only among Epicureans or other ancient heathens, but among moderns speaking of the Christian religion. Now, methinks it is unreasonable to oppose against the general concurring opinion of the world, the observation of a particular person, or particular set of zealots, whose prejudice sticks close to them, and ever mixeth with their judgment; and who read, collect, and observe with an eye not to discover the truth, but to defend their prejudice.

Digitized by Google

*Cri.* Though I cannot think with Alciphron, yet I must own I admire his address and dexterity in argument. Popular and general opinion is by him represented, on certain occasions, to be a sure mark of error. But when it serves his ends that it should seem otherwise, he can as easily make it a character of truth. But it will by no means follow that a profane proverb, used by the friends and admired authors of a minute philosopher, must therefore be a received opinion, much less a truth grounded on the experience and observation of mankind. Sadness may spring from guilt or superstition, and rage from bigotry; but darkness might as well be supposed the natural effect of sunshine, as sullen and furious passions to proceed from the glad tidings and Divine precepts of the gospel. What is the sum and substance, scope and end of Christ's religion, but the love of God and man? To which all other points and duties (whether positive or moral) are relative and subordinate, as parts or means, as signs, principles, motives, or effects. Now, I would fain know how it is possible for evil or wickedness of any kind to spring from such a source? I will not pretend there are no evil qualities in Christians, nor good in minute philosophers. But this I affirm, that, whatever evil is in us, our principles certainly lead to good; and, whatever good there may be in you, it is most certain your principles lead to evil.

16. *Alc.* It must be owned there is a fair outside, and many plausible things may be said for the Christian religion taken simply as it lies in the gospel. But it is the observation of one of our great writers, that the first Christian preachers very cunningly began with the fairest face and the best moral doctrines in the world. It was all love, charity, meekness, patience, and so forth. But when by this means they had drawn over the world and got power, they soon changed their appearance, and shewed cruelty, ambition, avarice, and every bad quality.

*Cri.* That is to say, some men very cunningly preached and underwent a world of hardships, and laid down their lives to propagate the best principles and the best morals, to the end that others some centuries after might reap the benefit of bad ones. Whoever may be cunning, there is not much cunning in the maker of this observation.

Digitized by Google

*Alc.* And yet ever since this religion hath appeared in the world we have had eternal feuds, factions, massacres, and wars, the very reverse of that hymn with which it is introduced in the gospel:—"Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good-will towards men."[1]

*Cri.* This I will not deny. I will even own that the Gospel and the Christian religion have been often the pretexts for these evils; but it will not thence follow they were the cause. On the contrary, it is plain they could not be the real proper cause of these evils; because a rebellious, proud, revengeful, quarrelsome spirit is directly opposite to the whole tenor and most express precepts of Christianity: a point so clear that I shall not prove it. And, secondly, because all those evils you mention were as frequent, nay, much more frequent, before the Christian religion was known in the world. They are the common product of the passions and vices of mankind, which are sometimes covered with the mask of religion by wicked men, having the form of godliness without the power of it. This truth seems so plain that I am surprised how any man of sense, knowledge, and candour can make a doubt of it.

17. Take but a view of heathen Rome: what a scene is there of faction, and fury, and civil rage! Let any man consider the perpetual feuds between the patricians and plebeians, the bloody and inhuman factions of Marius and Sylla, Cinna and Octavius, and the vast havoc of mankind, during the two famous triumvirates. To be short, let any man of common candour and common sense but cast an eye from one end to the other of the Roman story, and behold that long scene of seditions, murders, massacres, proscriptions, and desolations of every kind, enhanced by every cruel circumstance of rage, rapine, and revenge; and then say, whether those evils were introduced into the world with the Christian religion, or whether they are not less frequent now than before?

*Alc.* The ancient Romans, it must be owned, had a high and fierce spirit, which produced eager contentions and very bloody catastrophes. The Greeks, on the other hand,

[1] See Tindal, "Christianity as old," &c., p. 153.—ED.

Digitized by Google

were a polite and gentle sort of men, softened by arts and philosophy. It is impossible to think of the little states and cities of Greece without wishing to have lived in those times, without admiring their policy, and envying their happiness.

*Cri.* Men are apt to consider the dark sides of what they possess, and the bright ones of things out of their reach. A fine climate, elegant taste, polite amusements, love of liberty, and a most ingenious inventive spirit for arts and sciences were indisputable prerogatives of ancient Greece. But, as for peace and quietness, gentleness and humanity, I think we have plainly the advantage: for those envied cities composed of gentle Greeks were not without their factions, which persecuted each other with such treachery, rage, and malice that in respect of them our factious folk are mere lambs. To be convinced of this truth, you need only look into Thucydides,[1] where you will find those cities in general involved in such bitter factions as for fellow-citizens without the formalities of war to murder one another, even in their senate-houses and their temples; no regard being had to merit, rank, obligation, or nearness of blood. And if human nature boiled up to so vehement a pitch in the politest people, what wonder that savage nations should scalp, roast, torture, and destroy each other, as they are known to do? It is therefore plain that without religion there would not be wanting pretexts for quarrels and debates; all which can very easily be accounted for by the natural infirmities and corruption of men. It would not perhaps be so easy to account for the blindness of those who impute the most hellish effects to the most Divine principle, if they could be supposed in earnest and to have considered the point. One may daily see ignorant and prejudiced men make the most absurd blunders. But that free-thinkers, divers to the bottom of things, fair inquirers, and openers of eyes, should be capable of such a gross mistake is what one would not expect.

18. *Alc.* The rest of mankind we could more easily give up: but as for the Greeks, men of the most refined genius

[1] Thucyd., lib. iii.

Digitized by Google

express a high esteem of them; not only on account of those qualities which you think fit to allow them, but also for their virtues.

*Cri.* I shall not take upon me to say how far some men may be prejudiced against their country, or whether others may not be prejudiced in favour of it. But, upon the fullest and most equal observation that I am able to make, it is my opinion that, if by virtue is meant truth, justice, gratitude, there is incomparably more virtue now at this day in England than at any time could be found in ancient Greece. Thus much will be allowed, that we know few countries, if any, where men of eminent worth, and famous for deserving well of the public, met with harder fate, and were more ungratefully treated than in the most polite and learned of the Grecian states. Though Socrates, it must be owned, would not allow that those statesmen, by adorning the city, augmenting the fleet, or extending the commerce of Athens, deserved well of their country; or could with justice complain of the ungrateful returns made by their fellow-citizens, whom, while they were in power, they had taken no care to make better men, by improving and cultivating their minds with the principles of virtue, which if they had done, they needed not to have feared their ingratitude. If I were to declare my opinion, what gave the chief advantage to Greeks and Romans and other nations which have made the greatest figure in the world, I should be apt to think it was a peculiar reverence for their respective laws and institutions, which inspired them with steadiness and courage, and that hearty generous love of their country: by which they did not merely understand a certain language or tribe of men, much less a particular spot of earth, but included a certain system of manners, customs, notions, rites, and laws, civil and religious.

*Alc.* Oh! I perceive your drift: you would have us reverence the laws and religious institutions of our country. But herein we beg to be excused, if we do not think fit to imitate the Greeks, or to be governed by any authority whatsoever.

*Cri.* So far from it. If Mahometanism were established by authority, I make no doubt those very free-thinkers, who at present applaud Turkish maxims and manners to that

Digitized by Google

degree you would think them ready to turn Turks, would then be the first to exclaim against them.[1]

*Alc.* But to return: as for wars and factions, I grant they ever were, and ever will be in the world, upon some pretext or other, as long as men are men.

19. But there is a sort of war and warriors peculiar to Christendom which the heathens had no notion of: I mean disputes in theology, and polemical divines, which the world hath been wonderfully pestered with: these teachers of peace, meekness, concord, and, what not! if you take their word for it: but, if you cast an eye upon their practice, you find them to have been in all ages the most contentious, quarrelsome, disagreeing crew, that ever appeared upon earth. To observe the skill and sophistry, the zeal and eagerness, with which those barbarians, the school-divines, split hairs and contest about chimeras, gives me more indignation, as being more absurd and a greater scandal to human reason, than all the ambitious intrigues, cabals, and politics of the court of Rome.

*Cri.* If divines are quarrelsome, that is not so far forth as divine, but as undivine and unchristian. Justice is a good thing; and the art of healing is excellent; nevertheless, in the administering of justice or physic, men may be wronged or poisoned. But as wrong cannot be justice, or the effect of justice, so poison cannot be medicine, or the effect of medicine; so neither can pride or strife be religion, or the effect of religion. Having premised this, I acknowledge you may often see hot-headed bigots engage themselves in religious as well as civil parties, without being of credit or service to either. And as for the Schoolmen in particular, I do not in the least think the Christian religion concerned in the defence of them, their tenets, or their method of handling them: but, whatever futility there may be in their notions, or inelegancy in their language, in pure justice to truth one must own they neither banter nor rail nor declaim in their writings, and are so far from shewing fury or passion that perhaps an impartial judge will think the minute philosophers are by no means to be compared with them, for

[1] This speech of Crito's was added to the second edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

keeping close to the point, or for temper and good manners. But, after all, if men are puzzled, wrangle, talk nonsense, and quarrel about religion, so they do about law, physic, politics, and everything else of moment. I ask whether, in these professions, or in any other where men have refined and abstracted, they do not run into disputes, chicane, nonsense, and contradictions, as well as in divinity? And yet this doth not hinder but there may be many excellent rules, and just notions, and useful truths, in all those professions. In all disputes human passions too often mix themselves, in proportion as the subject is conceived to be more or less important. But we ought not to confound the cause of man with the cause of God, or make human follies an objection to Divine truths. It is easy to distinguish what looks like wisdom from above, and what proceeds from the passion and weakness of men. This is so clear a point, that one would be tempted to think the not doing it was an effect, not of ignorance, but of something worse.

20. The conduct we object to minute philosophers is a natural consequence of their principles. Whatsoever they can reproach us with is an effect, not of our principles, but of human passion and frailty.

*Alc.* This is admirable. So we must no longer object to Christians the absurd contentions of Councils, the cruelty of Inquisitions, the ambition and usurpation of churchmen?

*Cri.* You may object them to Christians, but not to Christianity. If the Divine Author of our religion and His disciples have sowed a good seed; and, together with this good seed, the enemies of His gospel (among whom are to be reckoned the minute philosophers of all ages) have sowed bad seeds, whence spring tares and thistles; is it not evident, these bad weeds cannot be imputed to the good seed, or to those who sowed it? Whatever you do or can object against ecclesiastical tyranny, usurpation, or sophistry, may, without any blemish or disadvantage to religion, be acknowledged by all true Christians; provided still that you impute those wicked effects to their true cause, not blaming any principles or persons for them but those that really produce or justify them. Certainly, as the interests of Christianity are not to be supported by unchristian methods, whenever these are

Digitized by Google

made use of, it must be supposed there is some other latent principle which sets them at work. If the very court of Rome hath been known, from motives of policy, to oppose settling the Inquisition in a kingdom where the secular power hath endeavoured to introduce it in spite of that court;[1] we may well suppose that, elsewhere, factions of state and political views of princes have given birth to transactions seemingly religious, wherein at bottom neither religion, nor church, nor churchmen, were at all considered. As no man of common sense and honesty will engage in a general defence of ecclesiastics, so I think no man of common candour can condemn them in general. Would you think it reasonable to blame all statesmen, lawyers, or soldiers for the faults committed by those of their profession, though in other times, or in other countries, and influenced by other maxims and other discipline? And if not, why do you measure with one rule to the clergy, and another to the laity? Surely the best reason that can be given for this is prejudice. Should any man rake together all the mischiefs that have been committed in all ages and nations by soldiers and lawyers, you would, I suppose, conclude from thence, not that the state should be deprived of those useful professions, but only that their exorbitances should be guarded against and punished. If you took the same equitable course with the clergy, there would indeed be less to be said against you; but then you would have much less to say. This plain obvious consideration, if every one who read considered, would lessen the credit of your declaimers.

*Alc.* But when all is said that can be said, it must move a man's indignation to see reasonable creatures, under the notion of study and learning, employed in reading and writing so many voluminous tracts *de lanâ caprinâ*.

*Cri.* I shall not undertake the vindication of theological writings, a general defence being as needless as a general charge is groundless. Only let them speak for themselves; and let no man condemn them upon the word of a minute philosopher. But we will imagine the very worst, and suppose a wrangling pedant in divinity disputes, and ruminates, and writes upon a refined point, as useless and unintelligible

[1] P. Paolo, "Istoria dell' Inquisitione," p. 42.

Digitized by Google

as you please. Suppose this same person bred a layman, might he not have employed himself in tricking bargains, vexatious law-suits, factions, seditions, and such like amusements, with much more prejudice to the public? Suffer then curious wits to spin cobwebs: where is the hurt?

*Alc.* The mischief is, what men want in light they commonly make up in heat: zeal and ill-nature, being weapons constantly exerted by the partisans, as well as champions, on either side; and those perhaps not mean pedants or bookworms. You shall often see even the learned and eminent divine lay himself out in explaining things inexplicable, or contend for a barren point of theory, as if his life, liberty, or fortune were at stake.

*Cri.* No doubt all points in divinity are not of equal moment. Some may be too fine spun, and others have more stress laid on them than they deserve. Be the subject what it will, you shall often observe that a point, by being controverted, singled out, examined, and nearly inspected, groweth considerable to the same eye that, perhaps, would have overlooked it in a large and comprehensive view. Nor is it an uncommon thing to behold ignorance and zeal united in men who are born with a spirit of party, though the church or religion have in truth but small share in it. Nothing is easier than to make a *caricatura* (as the painters call it) of any profession upon earth: but, at bottom, there will be found nothing so strange in all this charge upon the clergy, as the partiality of those who censure them, in supposing the common defects of mankind peculiar to their order, or the effect of religious principles.

*Alc.* Other folks may dispute or squabble as they please, and nobody mind them; but, it seems, these venerable squabbles of the clergy pass for learning, and interest mankind. To use the words of the most ingenious Characterizer of our times:—"A ring is made, and readers gather in abundance. Every one takes party and encourages his own side. 'This shall be my champion!—This man for my money!—Well hit, on our side!—Again, a good stroke!—There he was even with him!—Have at him the next bout!—Excellent sport!'"[1]

[1] "Characteristics," vol. iii., c. 2, p. 9.

Digitized by Google

*Cri.* Methinks I trace the man of quality and breeding in this delicate satire, which so politely ridicules those arguments, answers, defences, and replications which the press groans under.

*Alc.* To the infinite waste of time and paper, and all the while nobody is one whit the wiser. And who indeed can be the wiser for reading books upon subjects quite out of the way, incomprehensible, and most wretchedly written? What man of sense or breeding would not abhor the infection of prolix pulpit eloquence; or of that dry, formal, pedantic, stiff, and clumsy style, which smells of the lamp and the college?

21. They who have the weakness to reverence the universities as seats of learning must needs think this a strange reproach; but it is a very just one. For the most ingenious men are now agreed, that they are only the nurseries of prejudice, corruption, barbarism, and pedantry.[1]

*Lys.* For my part, I find no fault with universities. All I know is that I had the spending of three hundred pounds a year in one of them, and think it the cheerfulest time of my life. As for their books and style, I had not leisure to mind them.

*Cri.* Whoever hath a mind to weed will never want work; and he that shall pick out bad books on every subject will soon fill his library. I do not know what theological writings Alciphron and his friends may be conversant in; but, I will venture to say, one may find among our English divines many writers who, for compass of learning, weight of matter, strength of argument, and purity of style are not inferior to any in our language. It is not my design to apologize for the universities: whatever is amiss in them (and what is there perfect among men?) I heartily wish amended. But I dare affirm, because I know it to be true, that any impartial observer, although they should not come up to what in theory he might wish or imagine, will nevertheless find them much superior to those that in fact are to be found in other countries, and far beyond the mean picture that is drawn of them by minute philosophers. It is natural for those to rail most at places of education who have profited

[1] See Shaftesbury, "Characteristics," vol. iii. Note on pp. 333-335. —ED.

Digitized by Google

least by them. Weak and fond parents will also readily impute to a wrong cause those corruptions themselves have occasioned, by allowing their children more money than they know how to spend innocently. And too often a gentleman who has been idle at the college, and kept idle company, will judge of a whole university from his own cabal.

*Alc.* Crito mistakes the point. I vouch the authority, not of a dunce, or a rake, or absurd parent, but of the most consummate critic this age has produced. This great man characterizeth men of the church and universities with the finest touches and most masterly pencil. What do you think he calls them?

*Euph.* What?

*Alc.* Why, the black tribe, magicians, formalists, pedants, bearded boys; and having sufficiently derided and exploded them, and their mean, ungenteel learning, he sets most admirable models of his own for good writing: and it must be acknowledged they are the finest things in our language; as I could easily convince you, for I am never without something of that noble writer about me.

*Euph.* He is then a noble writer?

*Alc.* I tell you he is a nobleman.

*Euph.* But a nobleman who writes is one thing, and a noble writer another.

*Alc.* Both characters are coincident, as you may see.

22. Upon which Alciphron pulled a treatise out of his pocket, entitled "A Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author." Would you behold, said he, looking round upon the company, a noble specimen of fine writing? do but dip into this book: which Crito opening, read verbatim as follows:[1]

> "Where then are the pleasures which ambition promises,
> And love affords? How's the gay world enjoy'd?
> Or are those to be esteem'd no pleasures
> Which are lost by dulness and inaction?
> But indolence is the highest pleasure.
> To live, and not to feel! To feel no trouble.
> What good then? Life itself. And is
> This properly to live? Is sleeping, life?

[1] Part III., sect. 2. "Characteristics," vol. i., pp. 318-320.—ED.

Digitized by Google

Is this what I should study to prolong?
Here the
Fantastic tribe itself seems scandalized.
A civil war begins: the major part
Of the capricious dames do range themselves
On reason's side,
And declare against the languid Siren.
Ambition blushes at the offered sweet.
Conceit and Vanity take superior airs.
Ev'n Luxury herself, in her polite
And elegant humour, reproves th' apostate
Sister,
And marks her as an alien to true pleasure.
Away, thou
Drowsy phantom! haunt me no more; for I
Have learn'd from better than thy sisterhood,
That life and happiness consist in action
And employment.

But here a busy form solicits us,
Active, industrious, watchful, and despising
Pains and labour. She wears the serious
Countenance of Virtue, but with features
Of anxiety and disquiet.
What is 't she mutters? What looks she on with
Such admiration and astonishment?
Bags! coffers! heaps of shining metal! What!
For the service of Luxury? For her
These preparations? Art thou then her friend,
Grave Fancy? Is it for her thou toilest?
No, but for provision against want.
But, luxury apart, tell me now,
Hast thou not already a competence?
'Tis good to be secure against the fear
Of starving. Is there then no death but this?
No other passage out of life? Are other doors
Secured if this be barr'd? Say, Avarice!
Thou emptiest of phantoms, is it not vile
Cowardice thou serv'st? What further have I then
To do with thee (thou doubly vile dependent)
When once I have dismiss'd thy patroness,
And despised her threats?

Thus I contend with Fancy and Opinion."[1]

Euphranor having heard thus far, cried out, What! will you never have done with your poetry? another time may

[1] This is Berkeley's way of hinting that Shaftesbury's "sublime periods" are only indifferent blank verse.—ED.



Digitized by Google

serve: but why should we break off our conference to read a play?

You are mistaken, it is no play nor poetry, replied Alciphron, but a famous modern critic moralizing in prose. You must know this great man hath (to use his own words) revealed a *grand arcanum* to the world, having instructed mankind in what he calls *mirror-writing*, *self-discoursing practice*, and *author practice*, and shewed, that "by virtue of an intimate recess we may discover a certain duplicity of soul, and divide our *self* into two parties," or (as he varies the phrase) "practically form the dual number."[1] In consequence whereof, he hath found out that a man may argue with himself; and not only with himself, but also with notions, sentiments, and vices, which by a marvellous prosopopœia he converts into so many ladies; and so converted, he confutes and confounds them in a Divine strain. Can anything be finer, bolder, or more sublime?

*Euph.* It is very wonderful. I thought, indeed, you had been reading a piece of tragedy. Is this he who despiseth our universities, and sets up for reforming the style and tastes of the age?

*Alc.* The very same. This is the admired critic of our times. Nothing can stand the test of his correct judgment, which is equally severe to poets and parsons. "The British Muses (saith this great man) lisp as in their cradles; and their stammering tongues, which nothing but youth and rawness can excuse, have hitherto spoken in wretched pun and quibble. Our dramatic Shakespear, our Fletcher, Jonson, and our epic Milton, preserve this style." And, according to him, even our later authors, "aiming at a false sublime, entertain our raw fancy and unpractised ear; which has not yet had leisure to form itself, and become truly musical."[2]

*Euph.* Pray what effect may the lessons of this great man, in whose eyes our learned professors are but bearded boys, and our most celebrated wits but wretched punsters, have had upon the public? Hath he rubbed off the college rust, cured the rudeness and rawness of our authors, and reduced them to his own attic standard? Do they aspire to his true sublime, or imitate his chaste unaffected style?

[1] "Characteristics," vol. i., p. 169.—ED.
[2] "Characteristics," vol. i., p. 217.—ED.

Digitized by Google

*Alc.* Doubtless the taste of the age is much mended: in proof whereof his writings are universally admired. When our author published this Treatise, he foresaw the public taste would improve apace; that arts and letters would grow to great perfection; that there would be a happy birth of genius: of all which things he spoke, as he saith himself, in a prophetic style.

*Cri.* And yet, notwithstanding the prophetical predictions of this critic, I do not find any science hath throve among us of late so much as the minute philosophy. In this kind, it must be confessed, we have had many notable productions. But whether they are such masterpieces for good writing, I leave to be determined by their readers.

23. In the meantime, I must beg to be excused if I cannot believe your great man on his bare word; when he would have us think that ignorance and ill-taste are owing to the Christian religion or the clergy, it being my sincere opinion that whatever learning or knowledge we have among us is derived from that order. If those who are so sagacious at discovering a mote in other eyes would but purge their own, I believe they might easily see this truth. For, what but religion could kindle and preserve a spirit towards learning in such a northern rough people? Greece produced men of active and subtile genius. The public conventions and emulations of their cities forwarded that genius; and their natural curiosity was amused and excited by learned conversation, in their public walks and gardens and porticos. Our genius leads to amusements of a grosser kind: we breathe a grosser and a colder air; and that curiosity which was general in Athenians, and the gratifying of which was their chief recreation, is among our people of fashion treated like affectation, and as such banished from polite assemblies and places of resort; and without doubt would in a little time be banished the country, if it were not for the great reservoirs of learning, where those formalists, pedants, and bearded boys, as your profound critic calls them, are maintained by the liberality and piety of our predecessors. For, it is as evident that religion was the cause of those seminaries as it is that they are the cause or source of all the learning and taste which are to be found, even in those very men who are the

Digitized by Google

declared enemies of our religion and public foundations. Every one, who knows anything, knows we are indebted for our learning to the Greek and Latin tongues. This those severe censors will readily grant. Perhaps they may not be so ready to grant, what all men must see, that we are indebted for those tongues to our religion. What else could have made foreign and dead languages in such request among us? What could have kept in being and handed them down to our times, through so many dark ages in which the world was wasted and disfigured by wars and violence? What, but a regard to the Holy Scriptures, and theological writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church? And in fact, do we not find that the learning of those times was solely in the hands of Ecclesiastics; that they alone lighted the lamp in succession one from another, and transmitted it down to after ages; and that ancient books were collected and preserved in their colleges and seminaries, when all love and remembrance of polite arts and studies was extinguished among the laity, whose ambition entirely turned to arms?

24. *Alc.* There is, I must needs say, one sort of learning undoubtedly of Christian original, and peculiar to the universities; where our youth spend several years in acquiring that mysterious jargon of Scholasticism; than which there could never have been contrived a more effectual method to perplex and confound human understanding. It is true, gentlemen are untaught by the world what they have been taught at the college: but then their time is doubly lost.

*Cri.* But what if this scholastic learning was not of Christian but of Mahometan original, being derived from the Arabs? And what if this grievance of gentlemen's spending several years in learning and unlearning this jargon be all grimace, and a specimen only of the truth and candour of certain minute philosophers, who raise great invectives from slight occasions, and judge too often without inquiring? Surely it would be no such deplorable loss of time, if a young gentleman spent a few months upon that so much despised and decried art of Logic, a surfeit of which is by no means the prevailing nuisance of this age. It is one thing to waste one's time in learning and unlearning the barbarous terms, wire-

Digitized by Google

drawn distinctions, and prolix sophistry of the Schoolmen; and another to attain some exactness in defining and arguing —things perhaps not altogether beneath the dignity even of a minute philosopher. There was indeed a time when Logic was considered as its own object: and that art of reasoning instead of being transferred to things, turned altogether upon words and abstractions; which produced a sort of leprosy in all parts of knowledge, corrupting and converting them into hollow verbal disputations in a most impure dialect. But those times are past; and that, which had been cultivated as the principal learning for some ages, is now considered in another light; and by no means makes that figure in the universities, or bears that part in the studies of young gentlemen educated there, which is pretended by those admirable reformers of religion and learning, the minute philosophers.

25. But who were they that encouraged and produced the restoration of arts and polite learning? What share had the minute philosophers in this affair? Matthias Corvinus king of Hungary, Alphonsus king of Naples, Cosmus de Medicis, Picus of Mirandula, and other princes, and great men, famous for learning themselves, and for encouraging it in other with a munificent liberality, were neither Turks, nor Gentiles, nor minute philosophers. Who was it that transplanted and revived the Greek language and authors, and with them all polite arts and literature, in the west? Was it not chiefly Bessarion a cardinal, Marcus Musurus an archbishop, Theodore Gaza a private clergyman? Has there been a greater and more renowned patron and restorer of elegant studies in every kind, since the days of Augustus Cæsar, than Leo the Tenth, pope of Rome? Did any writers approach the purity of the classics nearer than the cardinals Bembus and Sadoletus, or than the bishops of Jovius and Vida? Not to mention an endless number of ingenious Ecclesiastics, who flourished on the other side of the Alps in the Golden Age (as the Italians call it) of Leo the Tenth, and wrote, both in their own language and the Latin, after the best models of antiquity. It is true, this first recovery of learning preceded the Reformation, and lighted the way to it; but the religious controversies which ensued did wonderfully propagate and improve it in all parts of Christendom. And surely, the Church of England is at

Digitized by Google

least as well calculated for the encouragement of learning as that of Rome. Experience confirms this observation; and I believe the minute philosophers will not be so partial to Rome as to deny it.

*Alc.* It is impossible your account of learning beyond the Alps should be true. The noble critic in my hands, having complimented the French, to whom he allows some good authors, asserts of other foreigners, particularly the Italians, "That they may be reckoned no better than the corrupters of true learning and erudition."[1]

*Cri.* With some sorts of critics, dogmatical censures and conclusions are not always the result of perfect knowledge or exact inquiry; and if they harangue upon taste, truth of art, a just piece, grace of style, attic elegance, and such topics, they are to be understood only as those that would fain talk themselves into reputation for courage. To hear Thrasymachus speak of resentment, duels, and point of honour, one would think him ready to burst with valour.

*Lys.* Whatever merit this writer may have as a demolisher, I always thought he had very little as a builder. It is natural for careless writers to run into faults they never think of; but for an exact and severe critic to shoot his bolt at random is unpardonable. If he, who professes at every turn a high esteem for polite writing, should yet despise those who most excel in it; one would be tempted to suspect his taste. But if the very man who of all men talks most about art, and taste, and critical skill, and would be thought to have most considered those points, should often deviate from his own rules, into the false sublime, or the *mauvaise plaisanterie*, what reasonable man would follow the taste and judgment of such a guide, or be seduced, or climb the steep ascent, or tread in the rugged paths of virtue on his recommendation?

26. *Alc.* But to return: methinks Crito makes no compliment to the genius of his country, in supposing that Englishmen might not have wrought out of themselves all art and science and good taste; without being beholden to church or universities, or ancient languages.

[1] "Characteristics," vol. i., note on p. 335.

Digitized by Google

*Cri.* What might have been is only conjecture. What has been it is not difficult to know. That there is a vein in Britain, of as rich an ore as ever was in any country, I will not deny; but it lies deep, and will cost pains to come at: and extraordinary pains require an extraordinary motive. As for what lies next the surface, it seems but indifferent, being neither so good nor in such plenty as in some other countries. It was the comparison of an ingenious Florentine, that the celebrated poems of Tasso and Ariosto are like two gardens, the one of cucumbers, the other of melons. In the one you shall find few bad, but the best are not a very good fruit; in the other much the greater part are good for nothing, but those that are good are excellent. Perhaps the same comparison may hold, between the English and some of their neighbours.

*Alc.* But suppose we should grant that the Christian religion and its seminaries might have been of use, in preserving or retrieving polite arts and letters; what then? Will you make this an argument of its truth?

*Cri.* I will make it an argument of prejudice and ingratitude in those minute philosophers, who object darkness, ignorance, and rudeness as an effect of that very thing which above all others hath enlightened and civilized and embellished their country; which is as truly indebted to it for arts and sciences (which nothing but religion was ever known to have planted in such a latitude) as for that general sense of virtue and humanity, and belief of a Providence and future state, which all the argumentation of minute philosophers hath not yet been able to abolish.

27. *Alc.* It is strange you should still persist to argue as if all the gentlemen of our sect were enemies to virtue, and downright atheists; though I have assured you of the contrary, and that we have among us several who profess themselves in the interests of virtue and natural religion, and have also declared that I myself do now argue upon that foot.

*Cri.* How can you pretend to be in the interests of natural religion, and yet be professed enemies of the Christian; the only established religion which includes whatever is excellent in the natural, and which is the only means of making those

Digitized by Google

precepts, duties, and notions, so called, become reverenced throughout the world? Would not he be thought weak or insincere, who should go about to persuade people that he was much in the interests of an earthly monarch; that he loved and admired his government; when at the same time he shewed himself, on all occasions, a most bitter enemy of those very persons and methods which above all others contributed most to his service, and to make his dignity known and revered, his laws observed, or his dominion extended? And is not this what minute philosophers do, while they set up for advocates of God and religion, and yet do all they can to discredit Christians and their worship? It must be owned, indeed, that you argue against Christianity, as the cause of evil and wickedness in the world; but with such arguments and in such a manner as might equally prove the same thing of civil government, of meat and drink, of every faculty and profession, of learning, of eloquence, and even of human reason itself. After all, even those of your sect who allow themselves to be called Deists, if their notions are thoroughly examined, will I fear be found to include little of religion in them. As for the Providence of God watching over the conduct of human agents, and dispensing blessings or chastisements, the immortality of the soul, a final judgment, and future state of rewards and punishments; how few, if any, of your free-thinkers have made it their endeavour to possess men's minds with a serious sense of those great points of natural religion! How many, on the contrary, endeavour to render the belief of them doubtful or ridiculous! It must be owned there may be found men that, without any regard to these points, make some pretence to religion: but who shall think them in earnest? You shall sometimes see the very ringleaders of vice and profaneness write like men that would be thought to have virtue and piety at heart. This may, perhaps, prove them inconsistent writers, but can never prove them to be innocent. When a man's declared principles and peculiar tenets are utterly subversive of those things, whatever such an one saith of virtue, piety, and religion will be understood as mere deception, and compliance with common forms.[1]

[1] From "It must be owned," to this point (11 lines), was inserted in the second edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

*Lys.* To speak the truth, I, for my part, had never any liking to religion of any kind, either revealed or unrevealed; and I dare venture to say the same for those gentlemen of our sect that I am acquainted with, having never observed them guilty of so much meanness as even to mention the name of God with reverence, or to speak with the least regard of piety or any sort of worship. There may perhaps be found one or two formal pretenders to enthusiasm and devotion, in the way of natural religion, who laughed at Christians for publishing hymns and meditations, while they plagued the world with as bad of their own; but the sprightly men made a jest of all this. It seems to us mere pedantry. Sometimes, indeed, in good company one may hear a word dropped in commendation of honour and good-nature; but the former of these, by *connoisseurs*, is always understood to mean nothing but fashion; as the latter is nothing but temper and constitution, which guides a man just as appetite doth a brute.

28. And after all these arguments and notions, which beget one another without end, to take the matter short; neither I nor my friends for our souls could ever comprehend, why man might not do very well and govern himself without any religion at all, as well as a brute, which is thought the sillier creature of the two. Have brutes instincts, senses, appetites, and passions, to steer and conduct them? So have men, and reason over and above to consult upon occasion. From these premises, we conclude the road of human life is sufficiently lighted without religion.

*Cri.* Brutes having but small power, limited to things present or particular, are sufficiently opposed and kept in order by the force or faculties of other animals and the skill of man, without conscience or religion: but conscience is a necessary balance to human reason, a faculty of such mighty extent and power, especially towards mischief. Besides, other animals are, by the law of their nature, determined to one certain end or kind of being, without inclination or means either to deviate or go beyond it. But man hath in him a will and higher principle; by virtue whereof he may pursue different or even contrary ends; and either fall short of or exceed the perfection natural to his species in this world; as

Digitized by Google

he is capable, either by giving up the reins to his sensual appetites, of degrading himself into the condition of brutes, or else by well ordering and improving his mind, of being transformed into the similitude of angels. Man alone of all animals hath understanding to know his God. What availeth this knowledge unless it be to ennoble man, and raise him to an imitation and participation of the Divinity? Or what could such ennoblement avail if to end with this life? Or how can these things take effect without religion? But the points of vice and virtue, man and beast, sense and intellect, have been already at large canvassed. What! Lysicles, would you have us go back where we were three or four days ago?

*Lys.* By no means: I had much rather go forward, and make an end as soon as possible. But, to save trouble, give me leave to tell you once for all that, say what you can, you shall never persuade me so many ingenious agreeable men are in the wrong, and a pack of snarling sour bigots in the right.

29. *Cri.* O Lysicles! I neither look for religion among bigots, nor reason among libertines; each kind disgrace their several pretensions; the one owing no regard even to the plainest and most important truths, while the others exert an angry zeal for points of least concern. And surely whatever there is of silly, narrow, and uncharitable in the bigot, the same is in great measure to be imputed to the conceited ignorance and petulant profaneness of the libertine. And it is not at all unlikely that, as libertines make bigots, so bigots should make libertines, the extreme of one party being ever observed to produce a contrary extreme of another. And although, while these adversaries draw the rope of contention, reason and religion are often called upon, yet are they perhaps very little considered or concerned in the contest.

Lysicles, instead of answering Crito, turned short upon Alciphron. It was always my opinion, said he, that nothing could be sillier than to think of destroying Christianity, by crying up natural religion. Whoever thinks highly of the one can never, with a consistency, think meanly of the other; it being very evident that natural religion, without revealed,

Digitized by Google

never was and never can be established or received anywhere, but in the brains of a few idle speculative men. I was aware what your concessions would come to. The belief of a God, virtue, a future state, and such fine notions are, as every one may see with half an eye, the very basis and corner-stone of the Christian religion. Lay but this foundation for them to build on, and you shall soon see what superstructures our men of divinity will raise from it. The truth and importance of those points once admitted, a man need be no conjuror to prove, upon that principle, the excellency and usefulness of the Christian religion. And then to be sure, there must be priests to teach and propagate this useful religion. And if priests, a regular subordination without doubt in this worthy society, and a provision for their maintenance, such as may enable them to perform all their rites and ceremonies with decency, and keep their sacred character above contempt. And the plain consequence of all this is a confederacy between the prince and the priesthood to subdue the people; so we have let in at once upon us, a long train of ecclesiastical evils, priestcraft, hierarchy, inquisition. We have lost our liberty and property, and put the nation to vast expense, only to purchase bridles and saddles for their own backs.

30. This being spoke with some sharpness of tone, and an upbraiding air, touched Alciphron to the quick, who replied nothing, but showed confusion in his looks.

Crito smiling looked at Euphranor and me, then, casting an eye on the two philosophers, spoke as follows: If I may be admitted to interpose good offices for preventing a rupture between old friends and brethren in opinion, I would observe that in this charge of Lysicles there is something right and something wrong. It seems right to assert, as he doth, that the real belief of natural religion will lead a man to approve of revealed; but it is as wrong to assert that Inquisitions, tyranny, and ruin must follow from thence. Your free-thinkers, without offence be it said, seem to mistake their talent. They imagine strongly, but reason weakly; mighty at exaggeration, and jejune in argument! Can no method be found to relieve them from the terror of that fierce and bloody animal an English parson? Will it not suffice to

Digitized by Google

pare his talons without chopping off his fingers? Then they are such wonderful patriots for liberty and property! When I hear these two words in the mouth of a minute philosopher, I am put in mind of the *Teste di Ferro* at Rome. His Holiness, it seems, not having power to assign pensions on Spanish benefices to any but natives of Spain, always keeps at Rome two Spaniards, called *Teste di Ferro*, who have the name of all such pensions, but not the profit, which goes to Italians. As we may see every day both things and notions placed to the account of liberty and property which in reality neither have nor are meant to have any share in them. What! Is it impossible for a man to be a Christian but he must be a slave; or a clergyman but he must have the principles of an inquisitor? I am far from screening and justifying an appetite of domination or tyrannical power in ecclesiastics. Some, who have been guilty in that respect, have sorely paid for it, and it is to be hoped they always will. But, having laid the fury and folly of the ambitious prelate, is it not time to look about and spy whether, on the other hand, some evil may not possibly accrue to the state from the overflowing zeal of an independent Whig? This I may affirm, without being at any pains to prove it, that the worst tyranny this nation ever felt was from the hands of patriots of that stamp.

31. *Lys.* I don't know. Tyranny is a harsh word, and sometimes misapplied. When spirited men of independent maxims create a ferment, or make a change in the state, he that loseth is apt to consider things in one light, and he that wins in another. In the mean time, this is certainly good policy, that we should be frugal of our money, and reserve it for better uses than to expend on the church and religion.

*Cri.* Surely the old apologue of the belly and members need not be repeated to such knowing men. It should seem as needless to observe, that all other states which ever made any figure in the world for wisdom and politeness have thought learning deserved encouragement as well as the sword; that grants for religious uses were as fitting as for knights' service; and foundations for propagating piety as necessary to the public welfare and defence as either civil or

Digitized by Google

military establishments. [1] In former times, when the clergy were a body much more numerous, wealthy, and powerful; when in their state of celibacy they gave no pledges to the public; when they enjoyed great exemptions and privileges above their fellow-subjects; when they owned obedience to a foreign potentate: the case was evidently and widely different from what it is in our days. And the not discerning or not owning this difference is no proof either of sagacity or honesty in the minute philosophers. But I ask who are at this expense, and what is this expense so much complained of?

*Lys.* As if you had never heard of church-lands and tithes!

*Cri.* But I would fain know how they can be charged as an expense, either upon the nation or private men. Where nothing is exported the nation loseth nothing: and it is all one to the public whether money circulates at home through the hands of a vicar or a squire. Then, as for private men, who, for want of thought, are full of complaint about the payment of tithes; can any man justly complain of it as a tax, that he pays what never belonged to him? The tenant rents his farm with this condition, and pays his landlord proportionately less than if his farm had been exempt from it: so he loseth nothing; it being all one to him, whether he pays his pastor or his landlord. The landlord cannot complain that he has not what he hath no right to, either by grant, purchase, or inheritance. This is the case of tithes; and as for the church-lands, he surely can be no free-thinker, nor any thinker at all, who doth not see that no man, whether noble, gentle, or plebeian, hath any sort of right or claim to them which he may not with equal justice pretend to all the lands in the kingdom.

*Lys.* At present indeed we have no right, and that is our complaint.

*Cri.* You would have then what you have no right to.

*Lys.* Not so neither: what we would have is first a right conveyed by law, and, in the next place, the lands by virtue of such right.

*Cri.* In order to this, it might be expedient in the first place, to get an act passed for excommunicating from all

[1] From this point to "minute philosophers" (10 lines) was added to the second edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

civil rights every man that is a Christian, a scholar, and wears a black coat, as guilty of three capital offences against the public weal of this realm.

*Lys.* To deal frankly, I think it would be an excellent good act. It would provide at once for several deserving men, rare artificers in wit, and argument, and ridicule! who have, too many of them, but small fortunes, with a great arrear of merit towards their country, which they have so long enlightened and adorned *gratis*.

*Euph.* Pray tell me, Lysicles, are not the clergy legally possessed of their lands and emoluments?

*Lys.* Nobody denies it.

*Euph.* Have they not been possessed of them from time immemorial?

*Lys.* This too I grant.

*Euph.* They claim them by law and ancient prescription?

*Lys.* They do.

*Euph.* Have the oldest families of the nobility a better title?

*Lys.* I believe not. It grieves me to see so many overgrown estates in the hands of ancient families, on account of no other merit but what they brought with them into the world.

*Euph.* May you not then as well take their lands too, and bestow them on minute philosophers, as persons of more merit?

*Lys.* So much the better. This enlarges our view and opens a new scene: it is very delightful, in the contemplation of truth, to behold how one theory grows out of another.

*Alc.* Old Pætus used to say that if the clergy were deprived of their hire we should lose the most popular argument against them.

*Lys.* But, so long as men live by religion, there will never be wanting teachers and writers in defence of it.

*Cri.* And how can you be sure they would be wanting though they did not live by it; since it is well known Christianity had its defenders even when men died by it?

*Lys.* One thing I know: there is a rare nursery of young plants growing up, who have been carefully guarded against every air of prejudice, and sprinkled with the dew of our choicest principles: meanwhile, wishes are wearisome; and to our infinite regret nothing can be done, so long as there

Digitized by Google

remains any prejudice in favour of old customs and laws and national constitutions, which, at bottom, we very well know and can demonstrate to be only words and notions.

32. But I can never hope, Crito, to make you think my schemes reasonable. We reason each right upon his own principles, and shall never agree till we quit our principles, which cannot be done by reasoning. We all talk of just, and right, and wrong, and public good, and all those things. The names may be the same, but the notions and conclusions very different, perhaps diametrically opposite; and yet each may admit of clear proofs, and be inferred by the same way of reasoning. For instance, the gentlemen of the club which I frequent define man to be a sociable animal: consequently, we exclude from this definition all those human creatures of whom it may be said, we would rather have their room than their company. And such, though wearing the shape of man, are to be esteemed, in all account of reason, not as men, but only as human creatures. Hence it plainly follows that men of pleasure, men of humour, and men of wit are alone properly and truly to be considered as men. Whatever, therefore, conduceth to the emolument of such is for the good of mankind, and consequently very just and lawful, although seeming to be attended with loss or damage to other creatures: inasmuch as no real injury can be done in life or property to those who know not how to enjoy them. This we hold for clear and well-connected reasoning. But others may view things in another light, assign different definitions, draw other inferences, and perhaps consider what we suppose the very top and flower of the creation only as a wart or excrescence of human nature. From all which there must ensue a very different system of morals, politics, rights, and notions.

*Cri.* If you have a mind to argue we will argue; if you have more mind to jest, we will laugh with you.

*Lys.*

—— Ridentem dicere verum
Quid vetat?

This partition of our kind into men and human creatures, puts me in mind of another notion, broached by one of our club, whom we used to call the Pythagorean.

Digitized by Google

33. He made a threefold partition of the human species, into birds, beasts, and fishes, being of opinion that the road of life lies upwards, in a perpetual ascent through the scale of being: in such sort that the souls of insects after death make their second appearance in the shape of perfect animals, birds, beasts, or fishes; which upon their death are preferred into human bodies; and in the next stage into beings of a higher and more perfect kind. This man we considered at first as a sort of heretic; because his scheme seemed not to consist with our fundamental tenet, the mortality of the soul: but he justified the notion to be innocent, inasmuch as it included nothing of reward or punishment, and was not proved by any argument which supposed or implied either incorporeal spirit or Providence, being only inferred, by way of analogy, from what he had observed in human affairs, the court, the church, and the army; wherein the tendency is always upwards from lower posts to higher. According to this system, the fishes are those men who swim in pleasure, such as *petits maitres*, *bons vivans*, and honest fellows. The beasts are dry, drudging, covetous, rapacious folk, and all those addicted to care and business, like oxen, and other dry-land animals, which spend their lives in labour and fatigue. The birds are airy notional men, enthusiasts, projectors, philosophers, and such-like: in each species every individual retaining a tincture of his former state, which constitutes what is called genius. If you ask me which species of human creatures I like best, I answer, the flying fish: that is, a man of animal enjoyment with a mixture of whim. Thus you see we have our creeds and our systems, as well as graver folks; with this difference, that they are not strait-laced but sit easy, to be slipped off or on, as humour or occasion serves. And now I can, with the greatest equanimity imaginable, hear my opinions argued against, or confuted.

34. *Alc.* It were to be wished all men were of that mind. But you should find a sort of men, whom I need not name, that cannot bear with the least temper to have their opinions examined or their faults censured. They are against reason, because reason is against them. For our parts we are all for liberty of conscience. If our tenets are absurd, we allow them to be freely argued and inspected; and by parity

Digitized by Google

of reason we might hope to be allowed the same privilege with respect to the opinions of other men.

*Cri.* O Alciphron! wares that will not bear the light are justly to be suspected. Whatever therefore moves you to make this complaint, take my word I never will: but as hitherto I have allowed your reason its full scope, so for the future I always shall. And though I cannot approve of railing or declaiming, not even in myself, whenever you have shewed me the way to it: yet this I will answer for, that you shall ever be allowed to reason as closely and as strenuously as you can. But, for the love of truth, be candid, and do not spend your strength and our time in points of no significancy, or foreign to the purpose, or agreed between us. We allow that tyranny and slavery are bad things: but why should we apprehend them from the clergy at this time? Rites and ceremonies we own are not points of chief moment in religion: but why should we ridicule things in their nature, at least, indifferent, and which bear the stamp of supreme authority? That men in divinity, as well as other subjects, are perplexed with useless disputes, and are likely to be so as long as the world lasts, I freely acknowledge: but why must all the human weakness and mistakes of clergymen be imputed to wicked designs? Why indiscriminately abuse their character and tenets? Is this like candour, love of truth, and free-thinking? It is granted there may be found, now and then, spleen and ill-breeding in the clergy: but are not the same faults incident to English laymen of a retired education and country life? I grant there is infinite futility in the school-men: but I deny that a volume of that doth so much mischief, as a page of minute philosophy. That weak or wicked men should, by favour of the world, creep into power and high stations in the church is nothing wonderful: and that in such stations they should behave like themselves is natural to suppose. But all the while it is evident that not the gospel but the world, not the spirit but the flesh, not God but the devil, puts them upon their unworthy achievements. We make no difficulty to grant that nothing is more infamous than vice and ignorance in a clergyman; nothing more base than a hypocrite, more frivolous than a pedant, more cruel than an inquisitor. But it must be also granted by you, gentlemen, that nothing is more ridiculous and absurd than



Digitized by Google

for pedantic, ignorant, and corrupt men to cast the first stone at every shadow of their own defects and vices in other men.

35. *Alc.* When I consider the detestable state of slavery and superstition, I feel my heart dilate and expand itself to grasp that inestimable blessing of independent liberty. This is the sacred and high prerogative, the very life and health of our English constitution. You must not therefore think it strange, if, with a vigilant and curious eye, we guard it against the minutest appearance of evil. You must even suffer us to cut round about, and very deep, and make use of the magnifying glass, the better to view and extirpate every the least speck which shall discover itself in what we are careful and jealous to preserve as the apple of our eye.

*Cri.* As for unbounded liberty, I leave it to savages, among whom alone I believe it is to be found: but, for the reasonable legal liberty of our constitution, I most heartily and sincerely wish it may for ever subsist and flourish among us. You and all other Englishmen cannot be too vigilant, or too earnest, to preserve this goodly frame, or to curb and disappoint the wicked ambition of whoever, laymen or ecclesiastic, shall attempt to change our free and gentle government into a slavish or severe one. But what pretext can this afford for your attempts against religion, or indeed how can it be consistent with them? Is not the Protestant religion a main part of our legal constitution? I remember to have heard a foreigner remark, that we of this island were very good Protestants, but no Christians. But whatever minute philosophers may wish, or foreigners say, it is certain our laws speak a different language.

*Alc.* This puts me in mind of the wise reasoning of a certain sage magistrate, who, being pressed by the raillery and arguments of an ingenious man, had nothing to say for his religion but that ten millions of people inhabiting the same island might, whether right or wrong, if they thought good, establish laws for the worshipping of God in their temples, and appealing to Him in their courts of justice. And that in case ten thousand ingenious men should publicly deride and trample on those laws, it might be just and lawful for the said ten millions to expel the said ten thousand ingenious men out of their said island.

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* And pray, what answer would you make to this remark of the sage magistrate?

*Alc.* The answer is plain. By the law of nature, which is superior to all positive institutions, wit and knowledge have a right to command folly and ignorance. I say, ingenious men have by natural right a dominion over fools.

*Euph.* What dominion over the laws and people of Great Britain minute philosophers may be entitled to by nature, I shall not dispute, but leave to be considered by the public.

*Alc.* This doctrine, it must be owned, was never thoroughly understood before our own times. In the last age, Hobbes and his followers, though otherwise very great men, declared for the religion of the magistrate; probably because they were afraid of the magistrate: but times are changed, and the magistrates may now be afraid of us.

*Cri.* I allow the magistrate may well be afraid of you in one sense, I mean, afraid to trust you. This brings to my thoughts a passage on the trial of Leander for a capital offence. That gentleman having picked out and excluded from his jury, by peremptory exception, all but some men of fashion and pleasure, humbly moved, when Dorcon was going to kiss the book, that he might be required to declare upon honour whether he believed either God or gospel. Dorcon, rather than hazard his reputation as a man of honour and free-thinker, openly avowed that he believed in neither. Upon which the court declared him unfit to serve on a jury. By the same reason, so many were set aside as made it necessary to put off the trial.

We are very easy, replied Alciphron, about being trusted to serve on juries, if we can be admitted to serve in lucrative employments.

*Cri.* But what if the government should enjoin that every one, before he was sworn into office, should make the same declaration which Dorcon was required to make?

*Alc.* God forbid! I hope there is no such design on foot.

*Cri.* Whatever designs may be on foot, thus much is certain: the Christian reformed religion is a principal part and corner-stone of our free constitution; and I verily think, the only thing that makes us deserving of freedom, or capable of enjoying it. Freedom is either a blessing or a curse as

Digitized by Google

men use it. And to me it seems that if our religion were once destroyed from among us, and those notions which pass for prejudices of a Christian education erased from the minds of Britons, the best thing that could befall us would be the loss of our freedom. Surely a people wherein there is such restless ambition, such high spirits, such animosity of faction, so great interests, in contest such unbounded licence of speech and press, amidst so much wealth and luxury, nothing but those *veteres aviæ*, which you pretend to extirpate, could have hitherto kept from ruin.

36. Under the Christian religion this nation hath been greatly improved. From a sort of savages, we have grown civil, polite, and learned. We have made a decent and noble figure both at home and abroad. And, as our religion decreaseth, I am afraid we shall be found to have declined. Why then should we persist in the dangerous experiment?

*Alc.* One would think, Crito, you had forgot the many calamities occasioned by churchmen and religion.

*Cri.* And one would think you had forgot what was answered this very day to that objection. But, not to repeat eternally the same things, I should observe, in the first place, that, if we reflect on the past state of Christendom, and of our country in particular, with our feuds and factions subsisting while we were all of the same religion, for instance, that of the White and Red Roses, so violent and bloody and of such long continuance; we can have no assurance that those ill humours, which have since shewn themselves under the mask of religion, would not have broke out with some other pretext, if this had been wanting. I observe, in the second place, that it will not follow, from any observations you can make on our history, that the evils, accidentally occasioned by religion, bear any proportion either to the good effects it hath really produced, or the evils it hath prevented. Lastly, I observe that the best things may, by accident, be the occasion of evil; which accidental effect is not, to speak properly and truly, produced by the good thing itself, but by some evil thing, which, being neither part, property, nor effect of it, happens to be joined with it. But I should be ashamed to insist and enlarge on so plain a point. Certainly whatever evils this nation might

Digitized by Google

have formerly sustained from superstition, no man of common sense will say the evils felt or apprehended at present are from that quarter. Priestcraft is not the reigning distemper at this day. And it will be owned that a wise man, who takes upon him to be vigilant for the public weal, should touch proper things at proper times, and not prescribe for a surfeit when the distemper is a consumption.

*Alc.* I think we have sufficiently discussed the subject of this day's conference. And now, let Lysicles take it as he will, I must, in regard to my own character, as a fair and impartial adversary, acknowledge there is something in what Crito hath said, upon the usefulness of the Christian religion. I will even own to you that some of our sect are for allowing it a toleration. I remember, at a meeting of several ingenious men, after much debate we came successively to divers resolutions. The first was, that no religion ought to be tolerated in the state: but this on more mature thought was judged impracticable. The second was, that all religion should be tolerated, but none countenanced except atheism: but it was apprehended that this might breed contentions among the lower sort of people. We came therefore to conclude, in the third place, that some religion or other should be established for the use of the vulgar. And, after a long dispute what this religion should be, Lysis, a brisk young man, perceiving no signs of agreement, proposed that the present religion might be tolerated, till a better was found. But, allowing it to be expedient, I can never think it true, so long as there lie unanswerable objections against it, which, if you please, I shall take the liberty to propose at our next meeting.

To which we all agreed.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

# ALCIPHRON:

## OR, THE

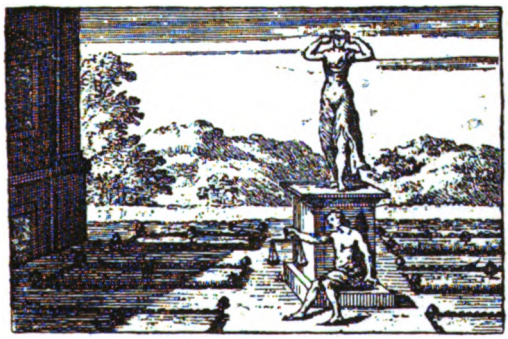
# MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.

## IN

# SEVEN DIALOGUES.

*Containing an* APOLOGY *for the* Christian Religion, *againſt thoſe who are called* Free-thinkers.

VOLUME *the* SECOND.



*The Balances of Deceit are in his Hand.* Hoſea xii. 7.

Τὸ Ἐξαπατᾶσθαι αὐτὸν ὑφ' αὑτοῦ, πάντων χαλεπώτατον. Plato.

*LONDON:*
Printed for J. TONSON in the *Strand*, 1732.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

# THE SIXTH DIALOGUE.[1]

1. Points agreed. 2. Sundry pretences to revelation. 3. Uncertainty of tradition. 4. Object and ground of faith. 5. Some books disputed, others evidently spurious. 6. Style and composition of Holy Scripture. 7. Difficulties occurring therein. 8. Obscurity not always a defect. 9. Inspiration neither impossible nor absurd. 10. Objections from the form and matter of Divine revelation considered. 11. Infidelity an effect of narrowness and prejudice. 12. Articles of Christian faith not unreasonable. 13. Guilt the natural parent of fear. 14. Things unknown reduced to the standard of what men know. 15. Prejudices against the incarnation of the Son of God. 16. Ignorance of the Divine economy a source of difficulties. 17. Wisdom of God foolishness to man. 18. Reason no blind guide. 19. Usefulness of Divine revelation. 20. Prophecies, whence obscure. 21. Eastern accounts of time older than the Mosaic. 22. The humour of Egyptians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and other nations, extending their antiquity beyond truth, accounted for. 23. Reasons confirming the Mosaic account. 24. Profane historians inconsistent. 25. Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian. 26. The testimony of Josephus considered. 27. Attestation of Jews and Gentiles to Christianity. 28. Forgeries and heresies. 29. Judgment and attention to minute philosophers. 30. Faith and miracles. 31. Probable arguments, a sufficient ground of faith. 32. The Christian religion able to stand the test of rational inquiry.

## 1.

THE following day being Sunday, our philosophers lay long in bed, while the rest of us went to church in the neighbouring town, where we dined at Euphranor's, and after evening service returned to the two philosophers, whom we found in the library. They told us that, if there was a God, he was present everywhere as well as at church; and

[1] From an examination of the practical results of Christianity, the argument proceeds to discuss the value of the evidences for that faith. It is Berkeley's reply to the "higher criticism" of the period. For the most part, it is hopelessly antiquated, but it is interesting and valuable as a concise indication of what critical ideas were current at this time.

Digitized by Google

that if we had been serving him one way, they did not neglect to do as much another; inasmuch as a free exercise of reason must be allowed the most acceptable service and worship that a rational creature can offer to its Creator. However, said Alciphron, if you, gentlemen, can but solve the difficulties which I shall propose to-morrow morning, I promise to go to church next Sunday.

After some general conversation of this kind, we sat down to a light supper, and the next morning assembled at the same place as the day before; where being all seated, I observed, that the foregoing week our conferences had been carried on for a longer time and with less interruption than I had ever known, or well could be, in town; where men's hours are so broken by visits, business, and amusements, that whoever is content to form his notions from conversation only must needs have them very shattered and imperfect.

And what have we got, replied Alciphron, by all these continued conferences? For my part, I think myself just where I was with respect to the main point that divides us —the truth of the Christian religion.

I answered, that so many points had been examined, discussed, and agreed, between him and his adversaries, that I hoped to see them come to an entire agreement in the end. For, in the first place, said I, the principles and opinions of those who are called free-thinkers, or minute philosophers, have been pretty clearly explained. It hath been also agreed, That vice is not of that benefit to the nation which some men imagine; that virtue is highly useful to mankind: but that the beauty of virtue is not alone sufficient to engage them in the practice of it; that therefore

The attacks on the Scriptures were practically initiated by Toland's "Life of Milton" (1698) and its successor "Amyntor" (1699); but were precipitated by Whiston's extraordinary attempt at defence entitled "An Essay towards restoring the true text of the Old Testament and for vindicating citations made thence in the New" (1722). The most formidable critic was Collins, whose "Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion" (1724) and "Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered" (1727) should be consulted *passim* for the source of most of the objections advanced in this dialogue. Thomas Woolston's "Discourse on the Miracles of our Saviour" (Six parts, 1727-29) is also slightly pertinent. Other references are given in the notes.—ED.

Digitized by Google

the belief of a God and Providence ought to be encouraged in the state, and tolerated in good company, as a useful notion. Further, it hath been proved that there is a God: that it is reasonable to worship Him: and that the worship, faith, and principles prescribed by the Christian religion have a useful tendency.

Admit, replied Alciphron, addressing himself to Crito, all that Dion saith to be true: yet this doth not hinder my being just where I was, with respect to the main point. Since there is nothing in all this that proves the *truth* of the Christian religion: though each of those particulars enumerated may, perhaps, prejudice in its favour. I am, therefore, to suspect myself at present for a prejudiced person; prejudiced, I say, in favour of Christianity. This, as I am a lover of truth, puts me upon my guard against deception. I must, therefore, look sharp, and well consider every step I take.

2. *Cri.* You may remember, Alciphron, you proposed, for the subject of our present conference the consideration of certain difficulties and objections which you had to offer against the Christian religion. We are now ready to hear and consider whatever you shall think fit to produce of that kind. Atheism, and a wrong notion of Christianity, as of something hurtful to mankind, are great prejudices; the removal of which may dispose a man to argue with candour, and submit to reasonable proof: but the removing prejudices against an opinion is not to be reckoned prejudicing in its favour. It may be hoped, therefore, that you will be able to do justice to your cause, without being fond of it.

*Alc.* O Crito! that man may thank his stars to whom nature hath given a sublime soul, who can raise himself above popular opinions, and, looking down on the herd of mankind, behold them scattered over the surface of the whole earth, divided and subdivided into numberless nations and tribes, differing in notions and tenets, as in language, manners, and dress. The man who takes a general view of the world and its inhabitants from this lofty stand, above the reach of prejudice, seems to breathe a purer air, and to see by a clearer light: but how to impart this clear and ex-

Digitized by Google

tensive view to those who are wandering beneath in the narrow dark paths of error! This indeed is a hard task; yet, hard as it is, I shall try if by any means

Clara tuæ possim præpandere lumina menti.—LUCRET.

Know then that all the various castes or sects of the sons of men have each their faith, and their religious system, germinating and sprouting forth from that common grain of Enthusiasm which is an original ingredient in the composition of human nature. They shall each tell of intercourse with the invisible world, revelations from heaven, divine oracles, and the like. All which pretensions, when I regard with an impartial eye, it is impossible I should assent to all, when I find within myself something that withholds me from assenting to any of them. For, although I may be willing to follow, so far as common sense and the light of nature lead; yet the same reason that bids me yield to rational proof forbids me to admit opinions without proof. This holds in general against all revelations whatsoever. And be this my first objection against the Christian in particular.

*Cri.* As this objection supposes there is no proof or reason for believing the Christian revelation, if good reason can be assigned for such belief, it comes to nothing. Now, I presume you will grant the authority of the reporter is a true and proper reason for believing reports: and the better this authority, the juster claim it hath to our assent: but the authority of God is on all accounts the best: whatever therefore comes from God, it is most reasonable to believe.

3. *Alc.* This I grant; but then it must be proved to come from God.

*Cri.* And are not miracles, and the accomplishments of prophecies, joined with the excellency of its doctrine, a sufficient proof that the Christian religion came from God?

*Alc.* Miracles, indeed, would prove something. But what proof have we of these miracles?

*Cri.* Proof of the same kind that we have or can have of any facts done a great way off, and a long time ago. We have authentic accounts transmitted down to us from eye-witnesses, whom we cannot conceive tempted to impose

Digitized by Google

upon us by any human motive whatsoever; inasmuch as they acted therein contrary to their interests, their prejudices, and the very principles in which they had been nursed and educated. These accounts were confirmed by the unparalleled subversion of the city of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation, which is a standing testimony to the truth of the gospel, particularly of the predictions of our blessed Saviour. These accounts, within less than a century, were spread throughout the world, and believed by great numbers of people. These same accounts were committed to writing, translated into several languages, and handed down with the same respect and consent of Christians in the most distant churches.

Do you not see, said Alciphron, staring full at Crito, that all this hangs by tradition? And tradition, take my word for it, gives but a weak hold: it is a chain, whereof the first links may be stronger than steel, and yet the last weak as wax, and as brittle as glass. Imagine a picture copied successively by a hundred painters, one from another; how like must the last copy be to the original! How lively and distinct will an image be, after a hundred reflexions between two parallel mirrors! Thus like and thus lively do I think a faint vanishing tradition, at the end of sixteen or seventeen hundred years. Some men have a false heart, others a wrong head; and, where both are true, the memory may be treacherous. Hence there is still something added, something omitted, and something varied from the truth: and the sum of many such additions, deductions, and alterations accumulated for several ages doth, at the foot of the account, make quite another thing.[1]

*Cri.* Ancient facts we may know by tradition, oral or written: and this latter we may divide into two kinds, private and public, as writings are kept in the hands of particular men, or recorded in public archives. Now, all these three sorts of tradition, for aught I can see, concur to attest the genuine antiquity of the gospels. And they are strengthened by collateral evidence from rites instituted, festivals observed, and monuments erected by ancient Christians, such as

[1] See Tindal, "Christianity as old," &c., pp. 232-246, &c., for animadversions on tradition, also "Characteristics," vol. iii., p. 330 *et seq.* —ED.

Digitized by Google

churches, baptisteries, and sepulchres. Now, allowing your objection holds against oral tradition, singly taken, yet I can think it no such difficult thing to transcribe faithfully. And things once committed to writing are secure from slips of memory, and may with common care be preserved entire so long as the manuscript lasts: and this experience shews may be above two thousand years. The Alexandrine manuscript is allowed to be above twelve hundred years old; and it is highly probable there were then extant copies four hundred years old. A tradition, therefore, of above sixteen hundred years old need have only two or three links in its chain. And these links, notwithstanding that great length of time, may be very sound and entire. Since no reasonable man will deny, that an ancient manuscript may be of much the same credit now as when it was first written. We have it on good authority, and it seems probable, that the primitive Christians were careful to transcribe copies of the gospels and epistles for their private use; and that other copies were preserved as public records, in the several churches throughout the world; and that portions thereof were constantly read in their assemblies. Can more be said to prove the writings of classic authors, or ancient records of any kind authentic?

Alciphron, addressing his discourse to Euphranor, said—It is one thing to silence an adversary, and another to convince him. What do you think, Euphranor?

*Euph.* Doubtless, it is.

*Alc.* But what I want is to be convinced.

*Euph.* That point is not so clear.

*Alc.* But if a man had ever so much mind, he cannot be convinced by probable arguments against demonstration.

*Euph.* I grant he cannot.

4. *Alc.* Now, it is as evident as demonstration can make it, that no Divine faith can possibly be built upon tradition. Suppose an honest and credulous countryman catechised and lectured every Sunday by his parish priest: it is plain he believes in the parson, and not in God. He knows nothing of revelations, and doctrines, and miracles but what the priest tells him. This he believes, and this faith is purely human. If you say he has the Liturgy and the Bible for the foundation of his faith, the difficulty still recurs. For, as to

Digitized by Google

the Liturgy, he pins his faith upon the civil magistrate, as well as the ecclesiastic: neither of which can pretend Divine inspiration. Then for the Bible, he takes both that and his Prayer-book on trust from the printer, who, he believes, made true editions from true copies. You see then faith, but what faith? Faith in the priest, in the magistrate, in the printer, editor, transcriber, none of which can with any pretence be called Divine. I had the hint from Cratylus; it is a shaft out of his quiver, and believe me, a keen one.[1]

*Euph.* Let me take and make trial of this same shaft in my hands. Suppose then your countryman hears a magistrate declare the law from the bench, or suppose he reads it in a statute-book. What think you, is the printer or the justice the true and proper object of his faith and submission? Or do you acknowledge a higher authority whereon to found those loyal acts, and in which they do really terminate? Again, suppose you read a passage in Tacitus that you believe true; would you say you assented to it on the authority of the printer or transcriber rather than the historian?

*Alc.* Perhaps I would, and perhaps I would not. I do not think myself obliged to answer these points. What is this but transferring the question from one subject to another? That which we considered was neither law nor profane history, but religious tradition, and Divine faith. I see plainly what you aim at, but shall never take for an answer to one difficulty, the starting of another.

*Cri.* O Alciphron! there is no taking hold of you, who expect that others should (as you were pleased to express) hold fair and stand firm, while you plucked out their prejudices. How shall he argue with you but from your concessions, and how can he know what you grant except you will be pleased to tell him?

*Euph.* But, to save you the trouble, for once I will suppose an answer. My question admits but of two answers: take your choice. From the one it will follow that, by a parity of reason, we can easily conceive how a man may have Divine faith, though he never felt inspiration or saw a miracle: inasmuch as it is equally possible for the mind, through what-

[1] See "Characteristics," vol. iii., pp. 319-334; also Tindal, "Christianity as old," &c., p. 324.—ED.

Digitized by Google

ever conduit, oral or scriptural, Divine revelation be derived, to carry its thoughts and submission up to the source, and terminate its faith not in human but Divine authority; not in the instrument or vessel of conveyance, but in the great origin itself, as its proper and true object. From the other answer it will follow that you introduce a general scepticism into human knowledge, and break down the hinges on which civil government, and all the affairs of the world, turn and depend: in a word, that you would destroy human faith to get rid of Divine. And how this agrees with your professing that you want to be convinced I leave you to consider.

5. *Alc.* I should in earnest be glad to be convinced one way or other, and come to some conclusion. But I have so many objections in store you are not to count much upon getting over one. Depend on it you shall find me behave like a gentleman and a lover of truth. I will propose my objections briefly and plainly, and accept of reasonable answers as fast as you can give them. Come, Euphranor, make the most of your tradition; you can never make that a constant and universal one, which is acknowledged to have been unknown, or at best disputed, in the Church for several ages: and this is the case of the canon of the New Testament. For, though we have now a canon, as they call it, settled, yet every one must see and own that tradition cannot grow stronger by age; and that what was uncertain in the primitive times cannot be undoubted in the subsequent.[1] What say you to this, Euphranor?

*Euph.* I should be glad to conceive your meaning clearly before I return an answer. It seems to me this objection of yours supposeth that where a tradition hath been constant and undisputed, such tradition may be admitted as a proof: but that where the tradition is defective, the proof must be so too. Is this your meaning?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* Consequently the Gospels, and Epistles of St. Paul, which were universally received in the beginning, and never since doubted of by the Church, must, notwithstanding this objection, be in reason admitted for genuine. And, if these

[1] See "Characteristics," vol. iii., pp. 330, 331.—ED.

Digitized by Google

books contain, as they really do, all those points that come into controversy between you and me, what need I dispute with you about the authority of some other books of the New Testament, which came later to be generally known and received in the Church? If a man assent to the undisputed books, he is no longer an infidel; though he should not hold the Revelations, or the Epistle of St. James or Jude, or the latter of St. Peter, or the two last of St. John to be canonical. The additional authority of these portions of Holy Scripture may have its weight in particular controversies between Christians, but can add nothing to arguments against an infidel as such. Wherefore, though I believe good reasons may be assigned for receiving these books, yet these reasons seem now beside our purpose. When you are a Christian it will be then time enough to argue this point. And you will be the nearer being so, if the way be shortened by omitting it for the present.

*Alc.* Not so near neither as you perhaps imagine: for, notwithstanding all the fair and plausible things you may say about tradition, when I consider the spirit of forgery which reigned in the primitive times, and reflect on the several Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, attributed to the apostles, which yet are acknowledged to be spurious, I confess I cannot help suspecting the whole.

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, do you suspect all Plato's writings for spurious, because the "Dialogue upon Death," for instance, is allowed to be so? Or will you admit none of Tully's writings to be genuine, because Sigonius imposed a book of his own writing for Tully's treatise "De Consolatione," and the imposture passed for some time on the world?

*Alc.* Suppose I admit for the works of Tully and Plato those that commonly pass for such. What then?

*Euph.* Why then I would fain know whether it be equal and impartial in a free-thinker, to measure the credibility of profane and sacred books by a different rule. Let us know upon what foot we Christians are to argue with minute philosophers; whether we may be allowed the benefit of common maxims in logic and criticism? If we may, be pleased to assign a reason why supposititious writings, which in the style and manner and matter bear visible marks of imposture, and have accordingly been rejected by the Church, can be made



Digitized by Google

an argument against those which have been universally received, and handed down by an unanimous constant tradition. I know nothing truly valuable that hath not been counterfeited; therefore this argument is universal: but that which concludes against all things is to be admitted against none.[1] There have been in all ages, and in all great societies of men many capricious, vain, or wicked impostors, who for different ends have abused the world by spurious writings, and created work for critics both in profane and sacred learning. And it would seem as silly to reject the true writings of profane authors for the sake of the spurious, as it would seem unreasonable to suppose, that among the heretics and several sects of Christians there should be none capable of the like imposture.

*Alc.* I see no means for judging: it is all dark and doubtful; mere guess-work, at so great distance of time.

*Cri.* But if I know that a number of fit persons, met together in Council, did examine and distinguish authentic writings from spurious, relating to a point of the highest concern, in an age near the date of those writings; though I at the distance of many more centuries had no other proof, yet their decision may be of weight to determine my judgment. Since it is probable they might have had several proofs and reasons for what they did, and not at all improbable that those reasons might be lost in so long a tract of time.[2]

6. *Alc.* But, be the tradition ever so well attested, and the books ever so genuine, yet I cannot suppose them wrote by persons divinely inspired so long as I see in them certain characters inconsistent with such a supposition. Surely the purest language, the most perfect style, the exactest method, and in a word all the excellences of good writing, might be expected in a piece composed or dictated by the Spirit of God. But books wherein we find the reverse of all this, it were impious not to reject, but to attribute to the Divinity.[3]

*Euph.* Say, Alciphron, are the lakes, the rivers, or the

[1] From "I know nothing," to this point (three lines), was added to the third edition.—ED.

[2] *Vide* Can. lx., Concil. Laodicen. (The last two speeches were added to the second edition.)

[3] "Characteristics," vol. iii., pp. 229-235.

Digitized by Google

ocean, bounded by straight lines? Are the hills and mountains exact cones or pyramids? Or the stars cast into regular figures?

*Alc.* They are not.

*Euph.* But in the works of insects we may observe figures as exact as if they were drawn by the rule and compass.

*Alc.* We may.

*Euph.* Should it not seem, therefore, that a regular exactness, or scrupulous attention to what men call the rules of art, is not observed in the great productions of the Author of nature?

*Alc.* It should.

*Euph.* And when a great prince declareth his will in laws and edicts to his subjects, is he careful about a pure style or elegant composition? Does he not leave his secretaries and clerks to express his sense in their own words? Is not the phrase on such occasions thought proper if it conveys as much as was intended? And would not the divine strain of certain modern critics be judged affected, and improper for such uses?

*Alc.* It must be owned, laws, and edicts, and grants, for solecism and tautology, are very offensive to the harmonious ears of an ingenious man.

*Euph.* Why then should we expect in the Oracles of God an exactness that would be misbecoming and beneath the dignity of an earthly monarch, and which bears no proportion or resemblance to the magnificent works of the creation?

*Alc.* But, granting that a nice regard to particles and critical rules is a thing too little and mean to be expected in Divine revelations; and that there is more force, and spirit, and true greatness in a negligent, unequal style, than in the well-turned periods of a polite writer; yet what is all this to the bald and flat compositions of those you call the Divine penmen? I can never be persuaded the Supreme Being would pick out the poorest and meanest scribblers for his secretaries.

*Euph.* O Alciphron! if I durst follow my own judgment, I should be apt to think there are noble beauties in the style of the Holy Scripture: in the narrative parts a strain so simple and unaffected: in the devotional and prophetic so animated and sublime: and in the doctrinal parts such an air of dignity

Digitized by Google

and authority as seems to speak their original Divine. But I shall not enter into a dispute about taste; much less set up my judgment on so nice a point against that of the wits, and men of genius, with which your sect abounds. And I have no temptation to it, inasmuch as it seems to me the Oracles of God are not the less so for being delivered in a plain dress, rather than in "the enticing words of man's wisdom."

*Alc.* This may perhaps be an apology for some simplicity and negligence in writing.

7. But what apology can be made for nonsense, crude nonsense?[1] Of which I could easily assign many instances, having once in my life read the Scripture through with that very view. Look here, said he, opening a Bible, in the forty-ninth Psalm, the author begins magnificently, calling upon all the inhabitants of the earth to give ear, and assuring them his mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the meditation of his heart shall be of understanding:

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?

He hath no sooner done with his preface but he puts this senseless question, "Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil; when the wickedness of my heels shall compass me about?" The iniquity of my heels! What nonsense after such a solemn introduction!

*Euph.* For my own part, I have naturally weak eyes, and know there are many things that I cannot see, which are nevertheless distinctly seen by others. I do not therefore conclude a thing to be absolutely invisible, because it is so to me. And, since it is possible it may be with my understanding as it is with my eyes, I dare not pronounce a thing to be nonsense, because I do not understand it. Of this passage many interpretations are given. The word rendered *heels* may signify fraud or supplantation: by some it is translated "past wickedness," the heel being the hinder part of the foot; by others "iniquity in the end of my days," the heel being one extremity of the body; by some "the iniquity of my enemies that may supplant me;" by others "my own

[1] See Tindal, "Christianity as old," &c., pp. 64, 207-209.—ED.

Digitized by Google

faults or iniquities which I have passed over as light matters, and trampled under my feet." Some render it "the iniquity of my ways;" others, "my transgressions, which are like slips and slidings of the heel." And after all, might not this expression, so harsh and odd to English ears, have been very natural and obvious in the Hebrew tongue, which, as every other language, had its idioms? the force and propriety whereof may as easily be conceived lost in a long tract of time, as the signification of divers Hebrew words which are not now intelligible, though nobody doubts but they had once a meaning as well as the other words of that language. Granting, therefore, that certain passages in the Holy Scripture may not be understood, it will not thence follow that its penman wrote nonsense; for I conceive nonsense to be one thing, and unintelligible another.

*Cri.* An English gentleman of my acquaintance one day entertaining some foreigners at his house sent a servant to know the occasion of a sudden tumult in the yard, who brought him word, "the horses were fallen together by the ears." His guests inquiring what the matter was, he translates it literally, *Les chevaux sont tombez ensemble par les oreilles:* which made them stare; what expressed a very plain sense in the original English being incomprehensible when rendered word for word into French. And I remember to have heard a man excuse the bulls of his countrymen, by supposing them so many literal translations.

*Euph.* But, not to grow tedious, I refer to the critics and commentators, where you will find the use of this remark, which, clearing up several obscure passages you take for nonsense, may possibly incline you to suspect your own judgment of the rest. In this very psalm you have pitched on, the good sense and moral contained in what follows, should, methinks, make a candid reader judge favourably of the original sense of the author, in that part which he could not understand. Say, Alciphron, in reading the classics, do you forthwith conclude every passage to be nonsense that you cannot make sense of?

*Alc.* By no means; difficulties must be supposed to rise from different idioms, old customs, hints, and allusions, clear in one time or place, and obscure in another.

*Euph.* And why will you not judge of Scripture by the

Digitized by Google

same rule? These sources of obscurity you mention are all common both to sacred and profane writings; and there is no doubt but an exacter knowledge in language and circumstances would in both cause difficulties to vanish like shades before the light of the sun. Jeremiah, to describe a furious invader, saith, "Behold he shall come up as a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong." One would be apt to think this passage odd and improper, and that it had been more reasonable to have said, "a lion from the mountain or the desert." But travellers, as an ingenious man observes, who have seen the river Jordan bounded by low lands with many reeds or thickets affording shelter to wild beasts (which being suddenly dislodged by a rapid overflowing of the river rush into the upland country), perceive the force and propriety of the comparison; and that the difficulty proceeds, not from nonsense in the writer, but from ignorance in the reader.[1]

[1] In the first and second editions this passage followed here: "It is needless to amass together instances which may be found in every commentator. I only beg leave to observe, that sometimes men looking higher or deeper than they need, for a profound or remote sense, overlook the natural obvious sense lying, if I may so say, at their feet, and so make difficulties instead of finding them. This seems to be the case of that celebrated passage, which hath created so much work, in St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians: 'What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?' I remember to have heard this text explained by Laches, the vicar of our parish, to my neighbour Lycon, who was much perplexed about its meaning. If it had been translated, as it might very justly, 'baptized for the sake of the dead,' I do not see, said Laches, why people should be puzzled about the sense of this passage; for, tell me, I beseech you, for whose sake do you think those Christians were baptized? For whose sake, answered Lycon, but their own? How do you mean, for their own sake in this life, or the next? Doubtless, in the next, for it was plain they could get nothing by it in this. They were then, replied Laches, baptized not for the sake of themselves while living, but for the sake of themselves when dead; not for the living, but the dead? I grant it. Baptism, therefore, must have been to them a fruitless thing, if the dead rise not at all? It must. Whence Laches inferred that St. Paul's argument was clear and pertinent for the resurrection: and Lycon allowed it to be *argumentum ad hominem* to those who had sought baptism. There is then, concluded Laches, no necessity for supposing that living men were in those days baptized instead of those who died without baptism, or of running into any other odd suppositions or strained and far-fetched interpretation to make sense of this passage."—ED.

Digitized by Google

*Alc.* Here and there a difficult passage may be cleared: but there are many which no art or wit of man can account for. What say you to those discoveries, made by some of our learned writers, of false citations from the Old Testament found in the Gospel?

*Euph.* That some few passages are cited by the writers of the New Testament out of the Old, and by the Fathers out of the New, which are not in so many words to be found in them, is no new discovery of minute philosophers, but was known and observed long before by Christian writers; who have made no scruple to grant that some things might have been inserted by careless or mistaken transcribers into the text, from the margin, others left out, and others altered; whence so many various readings. But these are things of small moment, and which all other ancient authors have been subject to; and upon which no point of doctrine depends which may not be proved without them. Nay further, if it be any advantage to your cause, it hath been observed, that the eighteenth Psalm, as recited in the twenty-second chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, varies in about forty places, if you regard every little verbal or literal difference; and that a critic may now and then discover small variations is what nobody can deny. But, to make the most of these concessions, what can you infer from them more than that the design of the Holy Scripture was not to make us exactly knowing in circumstantials? and that the Spirit did not dictate every particle and syllable, or preserve them from every minute alteration by miracle? which to believe, would look like Rabbinical superstition.

*Alc.* But what marks of Divinity can possibly be in writings which do not reach the exactness even of human art?

*Euph.* I never thought nor expected that the Holy Scripture should show itself Divine, by a circumstantial accuracy of narration, by exactness of method, by strictly observing the rules of rhetoric, grammar, and criticism, in harmonious periods, in elegant and choice expressions, or in technical definitions and partitions. These things would look too like a human composition. Methinks there is in that simple, unaffected, artless, unequal, bold, figurative style of the Holy Scripture, a character singularly great and majestic,

Digitized by Google

and that looks more like Divine inspiration than any other composition that I know. But, as I said before, I shall not dispute a point of criticism with the gentlemen of your sect, who, it seems, are the modern standard for wit and taste.

*Alc.* Well, I shall not insist on small slips, or the inaccuracy of citing or transcribing. And I freely own, that repetitions, want of method, or want of exactness in circumstances, are not the things that chiefly stick with me; no more than the plain patriarchal manners, or the peculiar usages and customs of the Jews and first Christians, so different from ours; and that to reject the Scripture on such accounts would be to act like those French wits who censure Homer because they do not find in him the style, notions, and manners of their own age and country. Was there nothing else to divide us, I should make no great difficulty of owning that a popular incorrect style might answer the general ends of revelation, as well perhaps as a more critical and exact one. But the obscurity still sticks with me. Methinks if the supreme Being had spoke to man, He would have spoke clearly to him, and that the Word of God should not need a comment.

8. *Euph.* You seem, Alciphron, to think obscurity a defect; but if it should prove to be no defect, there would then be no force in this objection.

*Alc.* I grant there would not.

*Euph.* Pray tell me, are not speech and style instrumental to convey thoughts and notions, to beget knowledge, opinion, and assent?

*Alc.* This is true.

*Euph.* And is not the perfection of an instrument to be measured by the use to which it is subservient?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* What therefore is a defect in one instrument may be none in another. For instance, edged tools are in general designed to cut; but, the uses of an axe and a razor being different, it is no defect in an axe that it hath not the keen edge of a razor; nor in a razor that it hath not the weight or strength of an axe.

*Alc.* I acknowledge this to be true.

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* And may we not say in general, that every instrument is perfect which answers the purpose or intention of him who useth it?

*Alc.* We may.

*Euph.* Hence it seems to follow, that no man's speech is defective in point of clearness, though it should not be intelligible to all men, if it be sufficiently so to those who he intended should understand it; or though it should not in all parts be equally clear, or convey a perfect knowledge, where he intended only an imperfect hint.

*Alc.* It seems so.

*Euph.* Ought we not therefore to know the intention of the speaker, to be able to know whether his style be obscure through defect or design?

*Alc.* We ought.

*Euph.* But is it possible for one man to know all the ends and purposes of God's revelations?

*Alc.* It is not.

*Euph.* How then can you tell but the obscurity of some parts of Scripture may well consist with the purpose which you know not, and consequently be no argument against its coming from God? The books of Holy Scripture were written in ancient languages, at distant times, on sundry occasions, and very different subjects. Is it not, therefore, reasonable to imagine that some parts or passages might have been clearly enough understood by those for whose proper use they were principally designed, and yet seem obscure to us, who speak another language, and live in other times? Is it at all absurd or unsuitable to the notion we have of God or man, to suppose that God may reveal, and yet reveal with a reserve upon certain remote and sublime subjects, content to give us hints and glimpses, rather than views? May we not also suppose, from the reason of things and the analogy of nature, that some points, which might otherwise have been more clearly explained, were left obscure merely to encourage our diligence and modesty? Two virtues, which, if it might not seem disrespectful to such great men, I would recommend to the minute philosophers.

Lysicles replied, This indeed is excellent! You expect that men of sense and spirit should in great humility put out their eyes, and blindly swallow all the absurdities

Digitized by Google

and nonsense that shall be offered to them for Divine revelation.

*Euph.* On the contrary, I would have them open their eyes, look sharply, and try the spirit, whether it is of God; and not supinely and ignorantly condemn in the gross all religions together, piety with superstition, truth for the sake of error, matter of fact for the sake of fiction: a conduct which at first sight would seem absurd in history, physic, or any other branch of human inquiry. But, to compare the Christian system, or Holy Scriptures, with other pretences to Divine revelation; to consider impartially the doctrines, precepts, and events therein contained; weigh them in the balance with any other religious, natural, moral, or historical accounts; and diligently to examine all those proofs, internal and external, that for so many ages have been able to influence and persuade so many wise, learned, and inquisitive men: perhaps they might find in it certain peculiar characters which sufficiently distinguish it from all other religions and pretended revelations, whereon to ground a reasonable faith. In which case, I leave them to consider whether it would be right to reject with peremptory scorn a revelation so distinguished and attested, upon account of obscurity in some parts of it? and whether it would seem beneath men of their sense and spirit to acknowledge that, for aught they know, a light inadequate to things may yet be adequate to the purpose of Providence? and whether it might be unbecoming their sagacity and critical skill to own, that literal translations from books in an ancient oriental tongue, wherein there are so many peculiarities, as to the manner of writing, the figures of speech, and the idioms, so remote from all our modern languages, and in which we have no other coeval writings extant, might well be obscure in many places, especially such as treat of subjects sublime and difficult in their own nature, or allude to things, customs, or events very distant from our knowledge? And lastly, whether it might not become their character, as impartial and unprejudiced men, to consider the Bible in the same light they would profane authors? Men are apt to make great allowance for transpositions, omissions, and literal errors of transcribers in other ancient books; and very great for the difference of style and manner, especially in Eastern writings, such as the

Digitized by Google

remains of Zoroaster and Confucius, and why not in the Prophets? In reading Horace or Persius, to make out the sense, they will be at the pains to discover a hidden drama, and why not in Solomon or St. Paul? I hear there are certain ingenious men who despise King David's poetry, and yet profess to admire Homer and Pindar. If there be no prejudice or affectation in this, let them but make a literal version from those authors into English prose, and they will then be better able to judge of the Psalms.

*Alc.* You may discourse and expatiate; but, notwithstanding all you have said or shall say, it is a clear point, that a revelation which doth not reveal can be no better than a contradiction in terms.

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, do you not acknowledge the light of the sun to be the most glorious production of Providence in this natural world?

*Alc.* Suppose I do.

*Euph.* This light, nevertheless, which you cannot deny to be of God's making, shines only on the surface of things, shines not at all in the night, shines imperfectly in the twilight, is often interrupted, refracted, and obscured, represents distant things and small things dubiously, imperfectly, or not at all. Is this true or no?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* Should it not follow, therefore, that to expect in this world a constant, uniform light from God, without any mixture of shade or mystery, would be departing from the rule and analogy of the creation? and that, consequently, it is no argument the light of revelation is not Divine, because it may not be so clear and full as you expect; [1] or because it may not equally shine at all times, or in all places.

*Alc.* As I profess myself candid and indifferent throughout this debate, I must needs own you say some plausible things, as a man of argument will never fail to do in vindication of his prejudices.

9. But, to deal plainly, I must tell you, once for all, that you may question and answer, illustrate, and enlarge for ever, without being able to convince me that the Christian

[1] From here, to the end of the speech, was added to the second edition.

Digitized by Google

religion is of Divine revelation. I have said several things, and have many more to say, which, believe me, have weight not only with myself, but with many great men my very good friends, and will have weight whatever Euphranor can say to the contrary.

*Euph.* O Alciphron! I envy you the happiness of such acquaintance. But, as my lot, fallen in this remote corner, deprives me of that advantage, I am obliged to make the most of this opportunity which you and Lysicles have put into my hands. I consider you as two able chirurgeons, and you were pleased to consider me as a patient, whose cure you have generously undertaken. Now, a patient must have full liberty to explain his case, and tell all his symptoms, the concealing of which might prevent a perfect cure. You will be pleased therefore to understand me, not as objecting to, or arguing against, either your skill or medicines, but only as setting forth my own case, and the effects they have upon me. Say, Alciphron, did you not give me to understand that you would extirpate my prejudices?

*Alc.* It is true: a good physician eradicates every fibre of the disease. Come, you shall have a patient hearing.

*Euph.* Pray, was it not the opinion of Plato, that God inspired particular men, as organs or trumpets, to proclaim and sound forth his oracles to the world?[1] And was not the same opinion also embraced by others the greatest writers of antiquity?

*Cri.* Socrates seems to have thought that all true poets spoke by inspiration; and Tully, that there was no extraordinary genius without it. This hath made some of our affected free-thinkers attempt to pass themselves upon the world for enthusiasts.

*Alc.* What would you infer from all this?

*Euph.* I would infer that inspiration should seem nothing impossible or absurd, but rather agreeable to the light of reason and the notions of mankind. And this, I suppose, you will acknowledge, having made it an objection against a particular revelation, that there are so many pretences to it throughout the world.

*Alc.* O Euphranor! he who looks into the bottom of

[1] Plato in Ione.

Digitized by Google

things, and resolves them into their first principles, is not easily amused with words. The word *inspiration* sounds indeed big, but let us, if you please, take an original view of the thing signified by it. To *inspire* is a word borrowed from the Latin, and, strictly taken, means no more than to breathe or blow in; nothing, therefore, can be inspired but what can be blown or breathed; and nothing can be so but wind or vapour, which indeed may fill or puff up men with fanatical and hypochondriacal ravings. This sort of inspiration I very readily admit.

*Euph.* What you say is subtle, and I know not what effect it might have upon me, if your profound discourse did not hinder its own operation.

*Alc.* How so?

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, do you discourse, or do you not? To me it seems that you discourse admirably.

*Alc.* Be that as it will, it is certain I discourse.

*Euph.* But, when I endeavour to look into the bottom of things, behold! a scruple riseth in my mind how this can be; for, to *discourse* is a word of Latin derivation, which originally signifies to run about; and a man cannot run about but he must change place, and move his legs; so long, therefore, as you sit on this bench, you cannot be said to discourse. Solve me this difficulty, and then perhaps I may be able to solve yours.

*Alc.* You are to know, that *discourse* is a word borrowed from sensible things, to express an invisible action of the mind, reasoning or inferring one thing from another; and, in this translated sense, we may be said to discourse though we sit still.

*Euph.* And may we not as well conceive that the term *inspiration* might be borrowed from sensible things, to denote an action of God, in an extraordinary manner, influencing, exciting, and enlightening the mind of a prophet or an apostle? who, in this secondary, figurative, and translated sense, may truly be said to be inspired, though there should be nothing in the case of that wind or vapour implied in the original sense of the word? It seems to me that we may, by looking into our own minds, plainly perceive certain instincts, impulses, and tendencies, which, at proper periods and occasions, spring up unaccountably in the soul of man.

Digitized by Google

We observe very visible signs of the same in all other animals. And, these things being ordinary and natural, what hinders but we may conceive it possible for the human mind, upon an extraordinary account, to be moved in an extraordinary manner, and its faculties stirred up and actuated by supernatural power? That there are, and have been, and are likely to be, wild visions and hypochondriacal ravings, nobody can deny; but, to infer from thence that there are no true inspirations would be too like concluding, that some men are not in their senses, because other men are fools. And, though I am no prophet, and consequently cannot pretend to a clear notion of this matter, yet I shall not therefore take upon me to deny but a true prophet or inspired person might have had a certain means of discerning between Divine inspiration and hypochondriacal fancy, as you can between sleeping and waking, till you have proved the contrary. You may meet in the book of Jeremiah with this passage, "The prophet that hath a dream let him tell a dream: and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully: what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"[1] You see here a distinction made between wheat and chaff, true and spurious, with the mighty force and power of the former. But I beg pardon for quoting Scripture to you. I make my appeal to the general sense of mankind, and the opinion of the wisest heathens, which seems sufficient to conclude Divine inspiration possible, if not probable, at least till you prove the contrary.

10. *Alc.* The possibility of inspirations and revelations I do not think it necessary to deny. Make the best you can of this concession.

*Euph.* Now what is allowed possible we may suppose in fact.

*Alc.* We may.

*Euph.* Let us then suppose that God had been pleased to make a revelation to men; and that He inspired some as a means to instruct others. Having supposed this, can you deny that their inspired discourses and revelations might

[1] Jer., xxiii. 28, 29.

Digitized by Google

have been committed to writing, or that, being written, after a long tract of time they might become in several places obscure; that some of them might even originally have been less clear than others, or that they might suffer some alteration by frequent transcribing, as other writings are known to have done? Is it not even very probable that all these things would happen?

*Alc.* I grant it.

*Euph.* And, granting this, with what pretence can you reject the Holy Scriptures as not being Divine, upon the account of such signs or marks as you acknowledge would probably attend a Divine revelation transmitted down to us through so many ages?

*Alc.* But allowing all that in reason you can desire, and granting that this may account for some obscurity, may reconcile some small differences, or satisfy us how some difficulties might arise, by inserting, omitting, or changing, here and there a letter, a word, or perhaps a sentence; yet these are but small matters, in respect of the much more considerable and weighty objections I could produce against the confessed doctrines, or subject-matter of those writings. Let us see what is contained in these sacred books, and then judge whether it is probable or possible such revelations should ever have been made by God. Now, I defy the wit of man to contrive anything more extravagant than the accounts we there find of apparitions, devils, miracles, God manifest in the flesh, regeneration, grace, self-denial, resurrection of the dead, and such-like *ægri somnia*: things so odd, unaccountable, and remote from the apprehension of mankind, you may as soon wash a blackamore white as clear them of absurdity. No critical skill can justify them, no tradition recommend them, I will not say for Divine revelations, but even for the inventions of men of sense.

*Euph.* I had always a great opinion of your sagacity, but now, Alciphron, I consider you as something more than man; else how should it be possible for you to know what or how far it may be proper for God to reveal? Methinks it may consist with all due deference to the greatest of human understandings, to suppose them ignorant of many things, which are not suited to their faculties, or lie out of their reach. Even the counsels of princes lie often beyond the ken of

Digitized by Google

their subjects, who can only know so much as is revealed by those at the helm; and are often unqualified to judge of the usefulness and tendency even of that, till in due time the scheme unfolds, and is accounted for by succeeding events. That many points contained in Holy Scripture are remote from the common apprehensions of mankind cannot be denied. But I do not see that it follows from thence they are not of Divine revelation. On the contrary, should it not seem reasonable to suppose that a revelation from God should contain something different in kind, or more excellent in degree, than what lay open to the common sense of men, or could even be discovered by the most sagacious philosopher? Accounts of separate spirits, good or bad, prophecies, miracles and such things, are undoubtedly strange; but I would fain see how you can prove them impossible or absurd.

*Alc.* Some things there are so evidently absurd that it would be almost as silly to disprove them as to believe them; and I take these to be of that class.

11. *Euph.* But is it not possible some men may shew as much prejudice and narrowness in rejecting all such accounts as others might easiness and credulity in admitting them? I never durst make my own observation or experience the rule and measure of things spiritual, supernatural, or relating to another world; because I should think it a very bad one even for the visible and natural things of this. It would be judging like the Siamese, who was positive it did not freeze in Holland, because he had never known such a thing as hard water or ice in his own country. I cannot comprehend why any one who admits the union of the soul and body should pronounce it impossible for the human nature to be united to the Divine, in a manner ineffable and incomprehensible by reason. Neither can I see any absurdity in admitting that sinful man may become regenerate, or a new creature, by the grace of God reclaiming him from a carnal life to a spiritual life of virtue and holiness. And since the being governed by sense and appetite is contrary to the happiness and perfection of a rational creature, I do not at all wonder that we are prescribed self-denial. As for the resurrection of the dead, I do not conceive it so very contrary to the analogy of nature, when I behold vegetables left to rot in the earth

Digitized by Google

rise up again with new life and vigour, or a worm, to all appearance dead, change its nature, and that, which in its first being crawled on the earth, become a new species, and fly abroad with wings. And indeed, when I consider that the soul and body are things so very different and heterogeneous, I can see no reason to be positive that the one must necessarily be extinguished upon the dissolution of the other; especially since I find in myself a strong natural desire of immortality, and I have not observed that natural appetites are wont to be given in vain, or merely to be frustrated. Upon the whole, those points which you account extravagant and absurd, I dare not pronounce to be so till I see good reason for it.

12. *Cri.* No, Alciphron, your positive airs must not pass for proofs; nor will it suffice to say, things are contrary to common sense, to make us think they are so. By common sense, I suppose, should be meant, either the general sense of mankind, or the improved reason of thinking men. Now, I believe that all those articles you have with so much capacity and fire at once summed up and exploded may be shewn to be not disagreeable, much less contrary, to common sense, in one or other of these acceptations. That the gods might appear and converse among men and that the Divinity might inhabit human nature were points allowed by the heathens; and for this I appeal to their poets and philosophers, whose testimonies are so numerous and clear that it would be an affront to repeat them to a man of any education. And, though the notion of a Devil may not be so obvious, or so fully described, yet there appear plain traces of it, either from reason or tradition. The latter Platonists, as Porphyry and Jamblichus, are very clear in the point, allowing that evil demons delude and tempt, hurt and possess mankind. That the ancient Greeks, Chaldeans, and Egyptians believed both good and bad angels may be plainly collected from Plato, Plutarch, and the Chaldean oracles. Origen observes, that almost all the Gentiles, who held the being of demons, allowed there were bad ones.[1] There is even something as early as Homer, that is thought by the learned Cardinal

[1] Origen, lib. vii., contra Celsum.



Digitized by Google

Bessarion[1] to allude to the fall of Satan, in the account of Ate, whom the poet represents as cast down from heaven by Jove, and then wandering about the earth, doing mischief to mankind. The same Ate is said by Hesiod to be the daughter of Discord: and by Euripides, in his Hippolytus, is mentioned as a tempter to evil. And it is very remarkable that Plutarch, in his book "De Vitando Ære Alieno," speaks, after Empedocles, of certain demons that fell from heaven, and were banished by God, Δαίμονες θεήλατοι καὶ οὐρανοπετεῖς. Nor is that less remarkable which is observed by Ficinus, from Pherecydes Syrus, that there had been a downfall of demons who revolted from God; and that Ophioneus (the old serpent) was head of that rebellious crew.[2] Then, as to other articles, let any one consider what the Pythagoreans taught of the purgation and λύσις, or deliverance of the soul: what most philosophers, but especially the Stoics, of subduing our passions: what Plato and Hierocles have said of forgiving injuries: what the acute and sagacious Aristotle writes in his Ethics to Nichomachus, of the spiritual and Divine life, that life which, according to him, is too excellent to be thought human; insomuch as man, so far forth as man, cannot attain to it, but only so far forth as he has something Divine in him: and, particularly, let him reflect on what Socrates taught, to wit, that virtue is not to be learned from men, that it is the gift of God, and that good men are not good by virtue of human care or diligence, οὔκ εἶναι ἀνθρωπίνην ἐπιμέλειαν ᾗ ἀγαθοὶ ἀγαθοὶ γίγνονται.[3] Let any man who really thinks but consider what other thinking men have thought, who cannot be supposed prejudiced in favour of revealed religion; and he will see cause, if not to think with reverence of the Christian doctrines of grace, self-denial, regeneration, sanctification, and the rest, even the most mysterious, at least to judge more modestly and warily than those who shall, with a confident air, pronounce them absurd, and repugnant to the reason of mankind. And, in regard to a future state, the common sense of the gentile world, modern or ancient, and the opinions of the wisest men of antiquity, are things so well known, that I need say nothing about

[1] In Calumniat. Platonis, lib. iii., cap. 7.
[2] *Vide* Argum. in Phædrum Platonis.
[3] *Vide* Plat. in Protag. et alibi passim.

Digitized by Google

them. To me it seems, the minute philosophers, when they appeal to reason and common sense, mean only the sense of their own party: a coin, how current soever among themselves, that other men will bring to the touchstone, and pass for no more than it is worth.

*Lys.* Be those notions agreeable to what or whose sense they may, they are not agreeable to mine. And if I am thought ignorant for this, I pity those who think me so.

13. I enjoy myself, and follow my own courses, without remorse or fear; which I should not do, if my head were filled with enthusiasm; whether gentile or Christian, philosophical or revealed, it is all one to me. Let others know or believe what they can, and make the best of it; I, for my part, am happy and safe in my ignorance.

*Cri.* Perhaps not so safe neither.

*Lys.* Why, surely you will not pretend that ignorance is criminal?

*Cri.* Ignorance alone is not a crime. But that wilful ignorance, affected ignorance, ignorance from sloth, or conceited ignorance, is a fault, might easily be proved by the testimony of heathen writers; and it needs no proof to shew that, if ignorance be our fault, we cannot be secure in it as an excuse.

*Lys.* Honest Crito seems to hint that a man should take care to inform himself while alive, lest his neglect be punished when he is dead. Nothing is so pusillanimous and unbecoming a gentleman as fear; nor could you take a likelier course to fix and rivet a man of honour in guilt, than by attempting to frighten him out of it. This is the stale absurd stratagem of priests, and that which makes them and their religion more odious and contemptible to me than all the other articles put together.

*Cri.* I would fain know why it may not be reasonable for a man of honour, or any man who has done amiss, to fear. Guilt is the natural parent of fear; and nature is not used to make men fear where there is no occasion. That impious and profane men should expect Divine punishment doth not seem so absurd to conceive: and that, under this expectation, they should be uneasy and even afraid, how consistent soever it may or may not be with honour, I am sure consists with reason.

Digitized by Google

*Lys.* That thing of hell and eternal punishment is the most absurd as well as the most disagreeable thought that ever entered the head of mortal man.

*Cri.* But you must own that it is not an absurdity peculiar to Christians, since Socrates, that great free-thinker of Athens, thought it probable there may be such a thing as impious men for ever punished in hell.[1] It is recorded of this same Socrates, that he has been often known to think for four-and-twenty hours together, fixed in the same posture, and wrapped up in meditation.

*Lys.* Our modern free-thinkers are a more lively sort of men. Those old philosophers were most of them whimsical. They had, in my judgment, a dry, narrow, timorous way of thinking, which by no means came up to the frank humour of our times.

*Cri.* But I appeal to your own judgment, if a man who knows not the nature of the soul can be assured, by the light of reason, whether it is mortal or immortal?

> An simul intereat nobiscum morte perempta,
> An tenebras orci visat vastasque lacunas?

*Lys.* But what if I know the nature of the soul? What if I have been taught that whole secret by a modern free-thinker? a man of science who discovered it not by a tiresome introversion of his faculties, not by amusing himself in a labyrinth of notions, or stupidly thinking for whole days and nights together, but by looking into things, and observing the analogy of nature.

14. This great man is a philosopher by fire, who has made many processes upon vegetables. It is his opinion that men and vegetables are really of the same species; that animals are moving vegetables, and vegetables fixed animals; that the mouths of the one and the roots of the other serve to the same use, differing only in position; that blossoms and flowers answer to the most indecent and concealed parts of the human body; that vegetable and animal bodies are both alike organized, and that in both there is life, or a certain motion and circulation of juices through proper tubes or

[1] *Vide* Platon. in Gorgia.

Digitized by Google

vessels. I shall never forget this able man's unfolding the nature of the soul in the following manner:—The soul, said he, is that specific form or principle from whence proceed the distinct qualities or properties of things. Now, as vegetables are a more simple and less perfect compound, and consequently more easily analysed than animals, we will begin with the contemplation of the souls of vegetables. Know then that the soul of any plant, rosemary for instance, is neither more nor less than its essential oil. Upon this depends its peculiar fragrance, taste, and medicinal virtues, or in other words its life and operations. Separate or extract this essential oil by chemic art, and you get the soul of the plant; what remains being a dead carcass, without any one property or virtue of the plant, which is preserved entire in the oil, a drachm whereof goes further than several pounds of the plant. Now this same essential oil is itself a composition of sulphur and salt, or of a gross unctuous substance, and a fine subtle principle or volatile salt imprisoned therein. The volatile salt is properly the essence of the soul of the plant, containing all its virtue; and the oil is the vehicle of this most subtle part of the soul, or that which fixes and individuates it. And as, upon separation of this oil from the plant, the plant dies, so a second death, or death of the soul, ensues upon the resolution of this essential oil into its principles; as appears by leaving it exposed for some time to the open air, so that the volatile salt or spirit may fly off; after which the oil remains dead and insipid, but without any sensible diminution of its weight, by the loss of that volatile essence of the soul, that ethereal aura, that spark of entity, which returns and mixes with the solar light, the universal soul of the world, and only source of life, whether vegetable, animal, or intellectual; which differ only according to the grossness or fineness of the vehicles, and the different textures of the natural alembics, or, in other words, the organized bodies where the above-mentioned volatile essence inhabits and is elaborated, where it acts and is acted upon. This chemical system lets you at once into the nature of the soul, and accounts for all its phenomena. In that compound which is called man, the soul or essential oil is what commonly goes by the name of animal spirit: for, you must know it is a point agreed by chemists, that spirits

Digitized by Google

are nothing but the more subtile oils. Now, in proportion as the essential oil of the vegetable man is more subtile than that of other vegetables, the volatile salt that impregnates it is more at liberty to act; which accounts for those specific properties and actions of human-kind, which distinguish them above other creatures. Hence you may learn why, among the wise ancients, salt was another name for wit, and in our times a dull man is said to be insipid or insulse. Aromatic oils, maturated by great length of time, turn to salts: this shews why human-kind grow wiser by age. And what I have said of the twofold death or dissolution, first of the compound, by separating the soul from the organical body, and secondly of the soul itself, by dividing the volatile salt from the oil, illustrates and explains that notion of certain ancient philosophers, that, as the man was a compound of soul and body, so the soul was compounded of the mind or intellect, and its æthereal vehicle; and that the separation of soul and body, or death of the man, is, after a long tract of time, succeeded by a second death of the soul itself, to wit, the separation or deliverance of the intellect from its vehicle, and reunion with the sun.

*Euph.* O Lysicles! your ingenious friend has opened a new scene, and explained the most obscure and difficult points in the clearest and easiest manner.

*Lys.* I must own this account of things struck my fancy. I am no great lover of creeds or systems; but when a notion is reasonable and grounded on experience I know how to value it.

*Cri.* In good earnest, Lysicles, do you believe this account to be true?

*Lys.* Why then in good earnest I do not know whether I do or no. But I can assure you the ingenious artist himself has not the least doubt about it. And to believe an artist in his art is a just maxim and a short way to science.

*Cri.* But what relation hath the soul of man to chemic art? The same reason that bids me trust a skilful artist in his art inclines me to suspect him out of his art. Men are too apt to reduce unknown things to the standard of what they know, and bring a prejudice or tincture from things they have been conversant in, to judge thereby of things in which they have not been conversant. I have known a

Digitized by Google

fiddler gravely teach that the soul was harmony; a geometrician very positive that the soul must be extended; and a physician, who, having pickled half-a-dozen embryos, and dissected as many rats and frogs, grew conceited, and affirmed there was no soul at all, and that it was a vulgar error.

*Lys.* My notions sit easy. I shall not engage in pedantic disputes about them. They who do not like them may leave them.

*Euph.* This, I suppose, is said much like a gentleman.

15. But pray, Lysicles, tell me whether the clergy come within that general rule of yours, that an artist may be trusted in his art?

*Lys.* By no means.

*Euph.* Why so?

*Lys.* Because I take myself to know as much of those matters as they do.

*Euph.* But you allow that, in any other profession, one who had spent much time and pains may attain more knowledge than a man of equal or better parts who never made it his particular business.

*Lys.* I do.

*Euph.* And nevertheless in things religious and Divine you think all men equally knowing.

*Lys.* I do not say all men. But I think all men of sense competent judges.

*Euph.* What! are the Divine attributes and dispensations to mankind, the true end and happiness of rational creatures, with the means of improving and perfecting their beings, more easy and obvious points than those which make the subject of every common profession?

*Lys.* Perhaps not: but one thing I know, some things are so manifestly absurd that no authority shall make me give in to them. For instance, if all mankind should pretend to persuade me that the Son of God was born upon earth in a poor family, was spit upon, buffeted, and crucified, lived like a beggar, and died like a thief, I should never believe one syllable of it. Common sense shews every one what figure it would be decent for an earthly prince or ambassador to make; and the Son of God, upon an embassy from heaven, must needs have made an appearance beyond all

Digitized by Google

others of great *éclat*, and in all respects the very reverse of that which Jesus Christ is reported to have made, even by His own historians.

*Euph.* O Lysicles! though I had ever so much mind to approve and applaud your ingenious reasoning, yet I dare not assent to this for fear of Crito.

*Lys.* Why so?

*Euph.* Because he observed just now, that men judge of things they do not know, by prejudices from things they do know. And I fear he would object that you, who have been conversant in the *grand monde*, having your head filled with a notion of attendants and equipage and liveries, the familiar badges of human grandeur, are less able to judge of that which is truly Divine; and that one who had seen less, and thought more, would be apt to imagine a pompous parade of worldly greatness not the most becoming the author of a spiritual religion, that was designed to wean men from the world, and raise them above it.

*Cri.* Do you think, Lysicles, if a man should make his entrance into London in a rich suit of clothes, with a hundred gilt coaches, and a thousand laced footmen; that this would be a more Divine appearance, and have more of true grandeur in it, than if he had power with a word to heal all manner of diseases, to raise the dead to life, and still the raging of the winds and the sea?

*Lys.* Without all doubt it must be very agreeable to common sense to suppose, that he could restore others to life who could not save his own. You tell us, indeed, that he rose again from the dead: but what occasion was there for him to die, the just for the unjust, the Son of God for wicked men? And why in that individual place? Why at that very time above all others? Why did he not make his appearance earlier, and preach in all parts of the world, that the benefit might have been more extensive and equal? Account for all these points, and reconcile them, if you can, to the common notions and plain sense of mankind.

*Cri.* And what if those, as well as many other points, should lie out of the road that we are acquainted with; must we therefore explode them, and make it a rule to condemn every proceeding as senseless that doth not square with the

Digitized by Google

vulgar sense of man? [1] That, indeed, which evidently contradicts sense and reason you have a right to disbelieve. And when you are unjustly treated you have the same right to complain. But I think you should distinguish between matter of debt and matter of favour. Thus much is observed in all intercourse between man and man; wherein acts of mere benevolence are never insisted on, or examined and measured with the same accurate line as matters of justice. Who but a minute philosopher would, upon a gratuitous distribution of favours, inquire, why at this time, and not before? why to these persons, and not to others? Various are the natural abilities and opportunities of human-kind. How wide a difference is there in respect of the law of nature between one of our stupid ploughmen and a minute philosopher! between a Laplander and an Athenian! That conduct, therefore, which seems to you partial and unequal may be found as well in the dispensation of natural religion as of revealed. And, if so, why it should be made an objection against the one more than the other, I leave you to account. For the rest of the precepts and certain primary tenets of religion appear in the eye of reason good and useful; and if they are also found to be so by their effects, we may, for the sake of them, admit certain other points or doctrines recommended with them to have a good tendency, to be right and true, although we cannot discern their goodness or truth by the mere light of human reason, which may well be supposed an insufficient judge of the proceedings, counsels, and designs of Providence, and this sufficeth to make our conviction reasonable.

16. It is an allowed point that no man can judge of this or that part of a machine taken by itself, without knowing the whole, the mutual relation or dependence of its parts, and the end for which it was made. And, as this is a point acknowledged in corporeal and natural things, ought we not, by a parity of reason, to suspend our judgment concerning the moral fitness of a single unaccountable part of the Divine economy, till we are more fully acquainted with the moral system, or world of spirits, and are let into the designs of

[1] From this point, to "I leave you to account" (20 lines), was added to the second edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

God's Providence, and have an extensive view of His dispensations past, present, and future? Alas! Lysicles, what do you know even of yourself, whence you come, what you are, or whither you are going? To me it seems that a minute philosopher is like a conceited spectator, who never looked behind the scenes, and yet would judge of the machinery; who, from a transient glimpse of a part only of some one scene, would take upon him to censure the plot of a play.

*Lys.* As to the plot I will not say; but in half a scene a man may judge of an absurd actor. With what colour or pretext can you justify the vindictive, froward, whimsical behaviour of some inspired teachers or prophets?[1] Particulars that serve neither for profit nor pleasure I make a shift to forget; but in general the truth of this charge I do very well remember.

*Cri.* You need be at no pains to prove a point I shall neither justify nor deny. [2]I would only beg leave to observe that it seems a sure sign of sincerity in the sacred writers, that they should be so far from palliating the defects, as to publish even the criminal and absurd actions of those very persons whom they relate to have been inspired. For the rest, that there have been human passions, infirmities, and defects, in persons inspired by God, I freely own; nay, that very wicked men have been inspired, as Balaam for instance and Caiaphas, cannot be denied. But what will you infer from thence? Can you prove it impossible that a weak or sinful man should become an instrument of the Spirit of God, for conveying His purpose to other sinners, or that Divine light may not, as well as the light of the sun, shine on a foul vessel without polluting its rays?

*Lys.* To make short work, the right way would be to put out our eyes, and not judge at all.

*Cri.* I do not say so; but I think it would be right, if some sanguine persons upon certain points suspected their own judgment.

*Alc.* But the very things said to be inspired, taken by themselves and in their own nature, are sometimes so wrong,

[1] See Tindal, "Christianity as old," pp. 243-245.—ED.

[2] From here, to "For the rest" (6 lines), was added to the third edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

to say no worse, that a man may pronounce them not to be Divine at first sight; without troubling his head about the system of Providence or connexion of events—as one may say that grass is green without knowing or considering how it grows, what uses it is subservient to, or how it is connected with the mundane system. Thus, for instance, the spoiling of the Egyptians, and the extirpation of the Canaanites, every one at first glance sees to be cruel and unjust, and may therefore, without deliberating, pronounce them unworthy of God.[1]

*Cri.* But, Alciphron, to judge rightly of these things, may it not be proper to consider how long the Israelites had wrought under those severe task-masters of Egypt, what injuries and hardships they had sustained from them, what crimes and abominations the Canaanites had been guilty of, what right God hath to dispose of the things of this world, to punish delinquents, and to appoint both the manner and the instruments of His justice? Man, who has not such right over his fellow-creatures, who is himself a fellow-sinner with them, who is liable to error as well as passion, whose views are imperfect, who is governed more by prejudice than the truth of things, may not improbably deceive himself, when he sets up for a judge of the proceedings of the holy, omniscient, impassive Creator and Governor of all things.

17. *Alc.* Believe me, Crito, men are never so industrious to deceive themselves, as when they engage to defend their prejudices. You would fain reason us out of all use of our reason. Can anything be more irrational? To forbid us to reason on the Divine dispensations is to suppose they will not bear the test of reason; or, in other words, that God acts without reason, which ought not to be admitted, no, not in any single instance. For if in one, why not in another? Whoever, therefore, allows a God must allow that he always acts reasonably. I will not therefore attribute to him actions and proceedings that are unreasonable. He hath given me reason to judge withal; and I will judge by that unerring light, lighted from the universal lamp of nature.

[1] See Tindal, "Christianity as old," pp. 248-249.—ED.

Digitized by Google

*Cri.* O Alciphron! as I frankly own the common remark to be true, that when a man is against reason, it is a shrewd sign reason is against him; so I should never go about to dissuade any one, much less one who so well knew the value of it, from using that noble talent. On the contrary, upon all subjects of moment, in my opinion, a man ought to use his reason: but then, whether it may not be reasonable to use it with some deference to superior reason, it will not perhaps be amiss to consider. [1] He who hath an exact view of the measure, and of the thing to be measured, if he applies the one to the other, may, I grant, measure exactly. But he who undertakes to measure, without knowing either, can be no more exact than he is modest. It may not, nevertheless, be impossible to find a man who, having neither an abstract idea of moral fitness, nor an adequate idea of the Divine economy, shall yet pretend to measure the one by the other.

*Alc.* It must surely derogate from the wisdom of God, to suppose His conduct cannot bear being inspected, not even by the twilight of human reason.

*Euph.* You allow, then, God to be wise?

*Alc.* I do.

*Euph.* What! infinitely wise?

*Alc.* Even infinitely.

*Euph.* His wisdom, then, far exceeds that of man?

*Alc.* Vastly.

*Euph.* Probably more than the wisdom of man that of a child?

*Alc.* Without all question.

*Euph.* What think you, Alciphron, must not the conduct of a parent seem very unaccountable to a child, when its inclinations are thwarted, when it is put to learn the letters, when it is obliged to swallow bitter physic, to part with what it likes, and to suffer and do, and see, many things done contrary to its own judgment, however reasonable or agreeable to that of others?

*Alc.* This I grant.

*Euph.* Will it not therefore follow from hence, by a parity of reason, that the little child, *man*, when it takes upon it to

[1] From this point, to the end of the speech (9 lines), was added to the second edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

judge of the schemes of parental Providence; and, a thing of yesterday, to criticise the economy of the Ancient of Days; will it not follow, I say, that such a judge, of such matters, must be apt to make very erroneous judgments? esteeming those things in themselves unaccountable, which he cannot account for, and concluding of some certain points, from an appearance of arbitrary carriage towards him, which is suited to his infancy and ignorance, that they are in themselves capricious or absurd, and cannot proceed from a wise, just, and benevolent God. This single consideration, if duly attended to and applied, would, I verily think, put an end to many conceited reasonings against revealed religion.

*Alc.* You would have us then conclude, that things, to our wisdom unaccountable, may nevertheless proceed from an abyss of wisdom which our line cannot fathom; and that prospects viewed but in part, and by the broken, tinged light of our intellects, though to us they may seem disproportionate and monstrous, may nevertheless appear quite otherwise to another eye, and in a different situation: in a word, that as human wisdom is but childish folly, in respect of the Divine, so the wisdom of God may sometimes seem foolishness to man.

18. *Euph.* I would not have you make these conclusions, unless in reason you ought to make them: but, if they are reasonable, why should you not make them?

*Alc.* Some things may seem reasonable at one time and not at another: and I take this very apology you make, for credulity and superstition, to be one of those things. When I view it in its principles, it seems naturally to follow from just concessions; but, when I consider its consequences, I cannot agree to it. A man had as good abdicate his nature as disclaim the use of reason. A doctrine is unaccountable; therefore it must be Divine!

*Euph.* Credulity and superstition are qualities so disagreeable and degrading to human nature, so surely an effect of weakness, and so frequently a cause of wickedness, that I should be very much surprised to find a just course of reasoning lead to them. I can never think that reason is a blind guide to folly, or that there is any connexion between truth and falsehood, no more than I can think a thing's being unaccountable a proof that it is Divine. Though, at the same

Digitized by Google

time, I cannot help acknowledging, it follows from your own avowed principles, that a thing's being unaccountable, or incomprehensible to our reason, is no sure argument to conclude it is not Divine; especially when there are collateral proofs of its being so. A child is influenced by the many sensible effects it hath felt of paternal love and care and superior wisdom, to believe and do several things with an implicit faith and obedience: and if we, in the same manner, from the truth and reasonableness which we plainly see in so many points within our cognizance, and the advantages which we experience from the seed of the gospel sown in good ground, were disposed to an implicit belief of certain other points, relating to schemes we do not know, or subjects to which our talents are perhaps disproportionate, I am tempted to think it might become our duty, without dishonouring our reason; which is never so much dishonoured as when it is foiled, and never in more danger of being foiled than by judging where it hath neither means nor right to judge.

*Lys.* I would give a good deal to see that ingenious gamester Glaucus have the handling of Euphranor one night at our club. I own he is a peg too high for me in some of his notions. But then he is admirable at vindicating human reason against the impositions of priestcraft.

19. *Alc.* He would undertake to make it as clear as daylight, that there was nothing worth a straw in Christianity, but what every one knew, or might know, as well without as with it, before as since Jesus Christ.

*Cri.* That great man, it seems, teacheth, that common-sense alone is the pole-star by which mankind ought to steer; and that what is called revelation must be ridiculous, because it is unnecessary and useless, the natural talents of every man being sufficient to make him happy, good, and wise, without any further correspondence from heaven either for light or aid.

*Euph.* I have already acknowledged how sensible I am, that my situation in this obscure corner of the country deprives me of many advantages, to be had from the conversation of ingenious men in town. To make myself some amends, I am obliged to converse with the dead and my own thoughts, which last I know are of little weight against the

Digitized by Google

authority of Glaucus, or such-like great men in the minute philosophy. But what shall we say to Socrates, for he too was of an opinion very different from that ascribed to Glaucus?

*Alc.* For the present we need not insist on authorities, ancient or modern, or inquire which was the greater man, Socrates or Glaucus. Though, methinks, for so much as authority can signify, the present times, gray and hoary with age and experience, have a manifest advantage over those that are falsely called *ancient*. But, not to dwell on authorities, I tell you in plain English, Euphranor, we do not want your revelations; and that for this plain reason, those that are clear everybody knew before, and those that are obscure nobody is the better for.

*Euph.* As it is impossible that a man should believe the practic principles of the Christian religion, and not be the better for them; so, it is evident that those principles may be much more easily taught as points of faith than demonstrated or discovered as points of science. This I call evident, because it is a plain fact. Since we daily see that many are instructed in matters of faith; that few are taught by scientific demonstration; and that there are still fewer who can discover truth for themselves. Did minute philosophers but reflect, how rarely men are swayed or governed by mere ratiocination, and how often by faith, in the natural or civil concerns of the world! how little they know, and how much they believe! How uncommon is it to meet with a man who argues justly, who is in truth a master of reason, or walks by that rule! How much better (as the world goes) men are qualified to judge of facts than of reasonings, to receive truth upon testimony than to deduce it from principles! How general a spirit of trust or reliance runs through the whole system of life and opinion! And at the same time how seldom the dry light of unprejudiced nature is followed or to be found! I say, did our thinking men but bethink themselves of these things, they would perhaps find it difficult to assign a good reason why *faith*, which hath so great a share in everything else, should yet have none in religion. But to come more closely to your point.[1] Whether it was possible for mankind to have known all parts of the Christian

[1] From the beginning of the speech, to this point (25 lines), was added to the second edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

religion, besides mysteries and positive institutions, is not the question between us; and that they actually did not know them is too plain to be denied. This, perhaps, was for want of making a due use of reason. But, as to the usefulness of revelation, it seems much the same thing whether they could not know, or would not be at the pains to know, the doctrines revealed. And, as for those doctrines which were too obscure to penetrate, or too sublime to reach, by natural reason; how far mankind may be the better for them is more, I had almost said, than even you or Glaucus can tell.

20. *Alc.* But, whatever may be pretended as to obscure doctrines and dispensations, all this hath nothing to do with prophecies; which, being altogether relative to mankind, and the events of this world, to which our faculties are surely well enough proportioned, one might expect should be very clear, and such as might inform instead of puzzling us.

*Euph.* And yet it must be allowed that, as some prophecies are clear, there are others very obscure: but, left to myself, I doubt I should never have inferred from thence that they were not Divine. In my own way of thinking, I should have been apt to conclude that the prophecies we understand are a proof for inspiration; but that those we do not understand are no proof against it. Inasmuch as for the latter our ignorance, or the reserve of the Holy Spirit may account; but for the other nothing, for aught that I see, can account but inspiration.

*Alc.* Now I know several sagacious men who conclude this very differently from you, to wit, that the one sort of prophecies is nonsense, and the other contrived after the events. Behold the difference between a man of free thought and one of narrow principles!

*Euph.* It seems then they reject the Revelations because they are obscure, and Daniel's prophecies because they are clear.

*Alc.* Either way a man of sense sees cause to suspect there has been foul play.

*Euph.* Your men of sense are, it seems, hard to please.

*Alc.* Our philosophers are men of piercing eyes.

*Euph.* I suppose such men never make transient judgments from transient views, but always establish fixed conclusions

Digitized by Google

upon a thorough inspection of things. For my own part, I dare not engage with a man who has examined those points so nicely as it may be presumed you have done; but I could name some eminent writers of our own, now living, whose books on the subject of prophecy have given great satisfaction to gentlemen who pass for men of sense and learning here in the country.

*Alc.* You must know, Euphranor, I am not at leisure to peruse the learned writings of divines, on a subject which a man may see through with half an eye. To me it is sufficient, that the point itself is odd, and out of the road of nature. For the rest, I leave them to dispute and settle among themselves, where to fix the precise time when the sceptre departed from Judah; or whether in Daniel's prophecy of the Messiah we should compute by the Chaldean or the Julian year. My only conclusion concerning all such matters is, that I will never trouble myself about them.

*Euph.* To an extraordinary genius, who sees things with half an eye, I know not what to say. But for the rest of mankind, one would think it very rash in them to conclude, without much and exact inquiry, on the unsafe side of a question which concerns their chief interest.

*Alc.* Mark it well: a true genius in pursuit of truth makes swift advances on the wings of general maxims, while little minds creep and grovel amidst mean particularities. I lay it down for a certain truth, that by the fallacious arts of logic and criticism, straining and forcing, palliating, patching, and distinguishing, a man may justify or make out anything; and this remark, with one or two about prejudice, saves me a world of trouble.

*Euph.* You, Alciphron, who soar sublime on strong and free pinions, vouchsafe to lend a helping hand to those whom you behold entangled in the birdlime of prejudice. For my part, I find it very possible to suppose prophecy may be Divine, although there should be some obscurity at this distance, with respect to dates of time or kinds of years. You yourself own revelation possible: and, allowing this, I can very easily conceive it may be odd, and out of the road of nature. I can, without amazement, meet in Holy Scripture divers prophecies, whereof I do not see the completion, divers texts I do not understand, divers mysteries above my com-



Digitized by Google

prehension, and ways of God to me unaccountable. Why may not some prophecies relate to parts of history I am not well enough acquainted with, or to events not yet come to pass? It seems to me that prophecies unfathomed by the hearer, or even the speaker himself, have been afterward verified and understood in the event; and it is one of my maxims, that, *what hath been may be.* Though I rub mine eyes, and do my utmost to extricate myself from prejudice, yet it still seems very possible to me that, what I do not, a more acute, more attentive, or more learned man, may understand. At least thus much is plain: the difficulty of some points or passages doth not hinder the clearness of others; and those parts of Scripture which we cannot interpret, we are not bound to know the sense of. What evil or what inconvenience, if we cannot comprehend what we are not obliged to comprehend, or if we cannot account for those things which it doth not belong to us to account for? Scriptures not understood, at one time, or by one person, may be understood at another time, or by other persons. May we not perceive, by retrospect on what is past, a certain progress from darker to lighter, in the series of the Divine economy towards man? And may not future events clear up such points as at present exercise the faith of believers? Now, I cannot help thinking (such is the force either of truth or prejudice) that in all this there is nothing strained or forced, or which is not reasonable or natural to suppose.

21. *Alc.* Well, Euphranor, I will lend you a helping hand, since you desire it, but think fit to alter my method. For, you must know, the main points of Christian belief have been infused so early, and inculcated so often by nurses, pedagogues, and priests, that, be the proofs ever so plain, it is a hard matter to convince a mind, thus tinctured and stained, by arguing against revealed religion from its internal characters. I shall therefore set myself to consider things in another light, and examine your religion by certain external characters or circumstantials, comparing the system of revelation with collateral accounts of ancient heathen writers, and shewing how ill it consists with them. Know then that, the Christian revelation supposing the Jewish, it follows that, if the Jewish be destroyed the Christian must of course fall to the ground.

Digitized by Google

Now, to make short work, I shall attack this Jewish revelation in its head. Tell me, are we not obliged, if we believe the Mosaic account of things, to hold the world was created not quite six thousand years ago?

*Euph.* I grant we are.

*Alc.* What will you say now, if other ancient records carry up the history of the world many thousand years beyond this period? What if the Egyptians and Chinese have accounts extending to thirty or forty thousand years? What if the former of these nations have observed twelve hundred eclipses, during the space of forty-eight thousand years, before the time of Alexander the Great? What if the Chinese have also many observations antecedent to the Jewish account of the creation? What if the Chaldeans had been observing the stars for above four hundred thousand years? And what shall we say if we have successions of kings and their reigns, marked for several thousand years before the beginning of the world, assigned by Moses? Shall we reject the accounts and records of all other nations, the most famous, ancient, and learned in the world, and preserve a blind reverence for the legislator of the Jews?

*Euph.* And pray, if they deserve to be rejected, why should we not reject them? What if those monstrous chronologies contain nothing but names without actions, and manifest fables? What if those pretended observations of Egyptians and Chaldeans were unknown or unregarded by ancient astronomers? What if the Jesuits have shown the inconsistency of the like Chinese pretensions with the truth of the Ephemerides? What if the most ancient Chinese observations allowed to be authentic are those of two fixed stars, one in the winter solstice, the other in the vernal equinox, in the reign of their king Yao, which was since the flood?[1]

*Alc.* You must give me leave to observe, the Romish missionaries are of small credit in this point.

*Euph.* But what knowledge have we, or can we have, of those Chinese affairs, but by their means? The same persons that tell us of these accounts refute them: if we reject their authority in one case, what right have we to build upon it in another?

[1] Bianchini, "Histor. Univers.," cap. 17.

Digitized by Google

*Alc.* When I consider that the Chinese have annals of more than forty thousand years, and that they are a learned, ingenious, and acute people, very curious, and addicted to arts and sciences, I profess I cannot help paying some regard to their accounts of time.[1]

*Euph.* Whatever advantage their situation and political maxims may have given them, it doth not appear they are so learned or so acute in point of science as the Europeans. The general character of the Chinese, if we may believe Trigaltius and other writers, is, that they are men of a trifling and credulous curiosity, addicted to search after the philosopher's stone, and a medicine to make men immortal, to astrology, fortune-telling, and presages of all kinds. Their ignorance in nature and mathematics is evident, from the great hand the Jesuits make of that kind of knowledge among them. But what shall we think of those extraordinary annals, if the very Chinese themselves give no credit to them for more than three thousand years before Jesus Christ? if they do not pretend to have begun to write history above four thousand years ago? and if the oldest books they have now extant, in an intelligible character, are not above two thousand years old? One would think a man of your sagacity, so apt to suspect everything out of the common road of nature, should not, without the clearest proof, admit those annals for authentic, which record such strange things as the sun's not setting for ten days, and gold raining three days together. Tell me, Alciphron, can you really believe these things without inquiring by what means the tradition was preserved, through what hands it passed, or what reception it met with, or who first committed it to writing?

*Alc.* To omit the Chinese and their story, it will serve my purpose as well to build on the authority of Manetho, that learned Egyptian priest, who had such opportunities of searching into the most ancient accounts of time, and copying into his dynasties the most venerable and authentic records inscribed on the pillars of Hermes.

*Euph.* Pray, Alciphron, where were those chronological pillars to be seen?

[1] The Chinese were in great favour with the Deists. See "Christianity as old," &c., pp. 404-405.—ED.

Digitized by Google

*Alc.* In the Seriadical land.

*Euph.* And where is that country?

*Alc.* I don't know.

*Euph.* How were those records preserved for so many ages down to the time of this Hermes, who is said to have been the first inventor of letters?

*Alc.* I do not know.

*Euph.* Did any other writers, before or since Manetho, pretend to have seen, or transcribed, or known anything about these pillars?

*Alc.* Not that I know.

*Euph.* Or about the place where they are said to have been?

*Alc.* If they did, it is more than I know.

*Euph.* Do the Greek authors that went into Egypt, and consulted the Egyptian priests, agree with these accounts of Manetho?

*Alc.* Suppose they do not.

*Euph.* Doth Diodorus, who lived since Manetho, follow, cite, or so much as mention this same Manetho?

*Alc.* What will you infer from all this?

*Euph.* If I did not know you and your principles, and how vigilantly you guard against imposture, I should infer that you were a very credulous man. For, what can we call it but credulity to believe most incredible things on most slender authority, such as fragments of an obscure writer, disagreeing with all other historians, supported by an obscure authority of Hermes' pillars, for which you must take his word, and which contain things so improbable as successions of gods and demi-gods, for many thousand years, Vulcan alone having reigned nine thousand? There is little in these venerable dynasties of Manetho besides names and numbers; and yet in that little we meet with very strange things, that would be thought romantic in another writer: for instance, the Nile overflowing with honey, the moon grown bigger, a speaking lamb, seventy kings who reigned as many days one after another, a king a day.[1] If you are known, Alciphron, to give credit to these things, I fear you will lose the honour of being thought incredulous.

*Alc.* And yet these ridiculous fragments, as you would

[1] Scal., "Can. Isag.," lib. ii.

Digitized by Google

represent them, have been thought worth the pains and lucubrations of very learned men. How can you account for the work that the great Joseph Scaliger and Sir John Marsham make about them?

*Euph.* I do not pretend to account for it. To see Scaliger add another Julian period to make room for such things as Manetho's dynasties, and Sir John Marsham take so much learned pains to piece, patch, and mend those obscure fragments, to range them in synchronisms, and try to adjust them with sacred chronology, or make them consistent with themselves and other accounts, is to me very strange and unaccountable. Why they, or Eusebius, or yourself, or any other learned man, should imagine those things deserve any regard I leave you to explain.[1]

22. *Alc.* After all, it is not easy to conceive what should move, not only Manetho, but also other Egyptian priests, long before his time, to set up such great pretences to antiquity, all which, however differing from one another, agree in this, that they overthrow the Mosaic history. How can this be accounted for without some real foundation? What point of pleasure, or profit, or power could set men on forging successions of ancient names and periods of time for ages before the world began?

*Euph.* Pray, Alciphron, is there anything so strange or singular in this vain humour of extending the antiquity of nations beyond the truth? Hath it not been observed in most parts of the world? Doth it not even in our own times shew itself, especially among those dependent and subdued people who have little else to boast of? To pass over others of our fellow-subjects who, in proportion as they are below their neighbours in wealth and power, lay claim to a more remote antiquity; are not the pretensions of Irishmen in this way known to be very great? If I may trust my memory, O'Flaherty, in his Ogygia, mentions some transactions in Ireland before the flood. The same humour, and from the same cause, appears to have prevailed in Sicily, a

[1] For a more modern view of Manetho see M'Clintock and Strong, "Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature"; also Böckh, "Manetho und die Hundssternperiode" (1845) and Von Pessl, "Das Chronologische System Manetho's" (1878).—ED.

Digitized by Google

country for some centuries past subject to the dominion of foreigners; during which time the Sicilians have published divers fabulous accounts, concerning the original and antiquity of their cities, wherein they vie with each other. It is pretended to be proved by ancient inscriptions, whose existence or authority seems on a level with that of Hermes' pillars, that Palermo was founded in the days of the patriarch Isaac by a colony of Hebrews, Phœnicians, and Syrians; and that a grandson of Esau had been governor of a tower subsisting within these two hundred years in that city.[1] The antiquity of Messina hath been carried still higher, by some who would have us think it was enlarged by Nimrod.[2] The like pretensions are made by Catania, and other towns of that island, who have found authors of as good credit as Manetho to support them. Now, I should be glad to know why the Egyptians, a subdued people, may not probably be supposed to have invented fabulous accounts from the same motive, and like others valued themselves on extravagant pretensions to antiquity, when in all other respects they were so much inferior to their masters? That people had been successively conquered by Ethiopians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Grecians, before it appears that those wonderful dynasties of Manetho and the pillars of Hermes were ever heard of; as they had been by the two first of those nations before the time of Solon himself, the earliest Greek that is known to have consulted the priests of Egypt; whose accounts were so extravagant that even the Greek historians, though unacquainted with Holy Scripture, were far from giving an entire credit to them. Herodotus, making a report upon their authority, saith, those to whom such things seem credible may make the best of them, for himself declaring that it was his purpose to write what he heard.[3] And both he and Diodorus do, on divers occasions, shew the same diffidence in the narratives of those Egyptian priests. And as we observed of the Egyptians, it is no less certain that the Phœnicians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans were each a conquered and reduced people, before the rest of the world appear to have heard anything of their pretensions to so remote antiquity.

[1] Fazelli, "Hist. Sicul.," decad. I., lib. viii.
[2] Reina, "Notizie Istoriche di Messina."
[3] Herodotus in Euterpe.

Digitized by Google

*Cri.* But what occasion is there to be at any pains to account for the humour of fabulous writers? Is it not sufficient to see that they relate absurdities; that they are unsupported by any foreign evidence; that they do not appear to have been in credit, even among their own countrymen; and that they are inconsistent one with another? That men should have the vanity to impose on the world by false accounts is nothing strange: it is much more so that, after what hath been done towards undeceiving the world by so many learned critics, there should be men found capable of being abused by those paltry scraps of Manetho, Berosus, Ctesias, or the like fabulous or counterfeit writers.

*Alc.* Give me leave to observe, those learned critics may prove to be ecclesiastics, perhaps some of them papists.

*Cri.* What do you think of Sir Isaac Newton, was he either a papist or ecclesiastic? Perhaps you may not allow him to have been in sagacity, or force of mind, equal to the great men of the minute philosophy; but it cannot be denied that he had read and thought much upon the subject, and that the result of his inquiry was a perfect contempt of all those celebrated rivals to Moses.

*Alc.* It hath been observed by ingenious men, that Sir Isaac Newton, though a layman, was deeply prejudiced: witness his great regard to the Bible.

*Cri.* And the same may be said of Mr. Locke, Mr. Boyle, Lord Bacon, and other famous laymen, who, however knowing in some points, must, nevertheless, be allowed not to have attained that keen discernment which is the peculiar distinction of your sect.

23. But perhaps there may be other reasons besides prejudice to incline a man to give Moses the preference; on the truth of whose history the government, manners, and religion of his country were founded and framed; of whose history there are manifest traces in the most ancient books and traditions of the gentiles, particularly of the Brachmans and Persees; not to mention the general attestation of Nature as well as Antiquity, to his account of a deluge;[1] whose history is confirmed by the late invention of arts and

[1] From "not to mention" to this point (two lines) was added to the third edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

sciences, the gradual peopling of the world, the very names of ancient nations, and even by the authority and arguments of that renowned philosopher Lucretius, who, on other points, is so much admired and followed by those of your sect. Not to mention, that the continual decrease of fluids, the sinking of hills, and the retardation of planetary motions, afford so many natural proofs which shew this world had a beginning; as the civil or historical proofs above mentioned do plainly point out this beginning to have been about the time assigned in Holy Scripture. After all which I beg leave to add one observation more. To any one who considers that, on digging into the earth, such quantities of shells, and, in some places, bones and horns of animals are found sound and entire, after having lain there in all probability some thousands of years; it should seem probable that gems, medals, and implements in metal and stone might have lasted entire, buried under the ground forty or fifty thousand years, if the world had been so old. How comes it then to pass that no remains are found, no antiquities of those numerous ages preceding the Scripture accounts of time; no fragments of buildings, no public monuments, no intaglios, cameos, statues, basso-relievos, medals, inscriptions, utensils, or artificial works of any kind are ever discovered, which may bear testimony to the existence of those mighty empires, those successions of monarchs, heroes, and demi-gods, for so many thousand years? Let us look forward and suppose ten or twenty thousand years to come; during which time we will suppose that plagues, famines, wars, and earthquakes shall have made great havoc in the world; is it not highly probable that, at the end of such a period, pillars, vases, and statues now in being, of granite, porphyry, or jasper (stones of such hardness as we know them to have lasted two thousand years above ground, without any considerable alteration), would bear record of these and past ages? Or, that some of our current coins might then be dug up, or old walls, and the foundations of buildings shew themselves, as well as the shells and stones of the primeval world are preserved down to our times? To me it seems to follow from these considerations, which common sense and experience make all men judges of, that we may see good reason to conclude, the world was created about the time recorded in

Digitized by Google

Holy Scripture. And if we admit a thing so extraordinary as the creation of this world, it should seem that we admit something strange, and odd, and new to human apprehension, beyond any other miracle whatsoever.

24. Alciphron sat musing and made no answer.

Whereupon Lysicles expressed himself in the following manner: I must own I should rather suppose with Lucretius, that the world was made by chance, and that men grew out of the earth, like pompions,[1] than pin my faith on those wretched fabulous fragments of Oriental history. And as for the learned men who have taken pains to illustrate and piece them together, they appear to me no better than so many musty pedants. An ingenious free-thinker may perhaps now and then make some use of their lucubrations, and play one absurdity against another. But you are not therefore to think he pays any real regard to the authority of such apocryphal writers, or believes one syllable of the Chinese, Babylonian, or Egyptian traditions. If we seem to give them a preference before the Bible, it is only because they are not established by law. This is my plain sense of the matter, and I dare say it is the general sense of our sect; who are too rational to be in earnest on such trifles, though they sometimes give hints of deep erudition, and put on a grave face to divert themselves with bigots.

*Alc.* Since Lysicles will have it so, I am content not to build on accounts of time preceding the Mosaic. I must nevertheless beg leave to observe, there is another point of a different nature, against which there do not lie the same exceptions, that deserves to be considered, and may serve our purpose as well. I presume it will be allowed that historians, treating of times within the Mosaic account, ought by impartial men to be placed on the same foot with Moses. It may therefore be expected that those who pretend to vindicate his writings should reconcile them with parallel accounts of other authors, treating of the same times, things, and persons. And, if we are not attached singly to Moses, but take our notions from other writers, and the probability of things, we shall see good cause to believe the Jews were

[1] *I.e.*, pumpkins.

Digitized by Google

only a crew of leprous Egyptians, driven from their country on account of that loathsome distemper; and that their religion, pretended to have been delivered from Heaven at Mount Sinai, was in truth learned in Egypt, and brought from thence.

*Cri.* Not to insist on what cannot be denied, that an historian writing of his own times is to be believed before others who treat of the same subject several ages after, it seems to me that it is absurd to expect that we should reconcile Moses with profane historians, till you have first reconciled them one with another. In answer, therefore, to what you observe, I desire you would consider, in the first place, that Manetho, Chæremon, and Lysimachus had published inconsistent accounts of the Jews, and their going forth from Egypt:[1] in the second place, that their language is a plain proof they were not of Egyptian, but either of Phœnician, of Syrian, or of Chaldean original: and, in the third place, that it doth not seem very probable to suppose their religion, the basis or fundamental principle of which was the worship of one supreme God, and the principal design of which was to abolish idolatry, could be derived from Egypt, the most idolatrous of all nations. It must be owned, the separate situation and institutions of the Jews occasioned their being treated by some foreigners with great ignorance and contempt of them and their original. But Strabo, who is allowed to have been a judicious and inquisitive writer, though he was not acquainted with their true history, makes more honourable mention of them. He relates that Moses, with many other worshippers of one infinite God, not approving the image-worship of the Egyptians and other nations, went out from Egypt and settled at Jerusalem, where they built a temple to one only God without images.[2]

25. *Alc.* We who assert the cause of liberty against religion, in these later ages of the world, lie under great disadvantages, from the loss of ancient books, which cleared up many points to the eyes of those great men, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, which at a greater distance and with less help

[1] Josephus, "Contra Apion," lib. i.
[2] Strab., lib. xvi.

Digitized by Google

cannot be so easily made out by us: but, had we those records, I doubt not we might demolish the whole system at once.

*Cri.* And yet I make some doubt of this; because those great men, as you call them, with all those advantages, could not do it.

*Alc.* That must needs have been owing to the dulness and stupidity of the world in those days, when the art of reasoning was not so much known and cultivated as of late. But those men of true genius saw through the deceit themselves, and were very clear in their opinion, which convinces me they had good reason on their side.

*Cri.* And yet that great man Celsus seems to have had very slight and inconstant notions: one while, he talks like a thorough Epicurean; another, he admits miracles, prophecies, and a future state of rewards and punishments. What think you, Alciphron, is it not something capricious in so great a man, among other advantages which he ascribes to brutes above human-kind, to suppose they are magicians and prophets; that they have a nearer commerce and union with the Divinity; that they know more of men; and that elephants, in particular, are of all others most religious animals and strict observers of an oath.[1]

*Alc.* A great genius will be sometimes whimsical. But what do you say to the Emperor Julian? was he not an extraordinary man?

*Cri.* He seems by his writings to have been lively and satirical. Further, I make no difficulty of owning that he was a generous, temperate, gallant, and facetious emperor. But at the same time it must be allowed, because his own heathen panegyrist Ammianus Marcellinus[2] allows it, that he was a prating, light, vain, superstitious sort of man. And therefore his judgment or authority can be of but small weight with those who are not prejudiced in his favour.

*Alc.* But of all the great men who wrote against revealed religion, the greatest without question was that truly great man Porphyry, the loss of whose invaluable work can never be sufficiently lamented. This profound philosopher went to the bottom and original of things. He most learnedly confuted the Scriptures, shewed the absurdity of the Mosaic

[1] Origen, "Contra Celsum," lib. iv.
[2] Am. Marcellin., lib. xxv.

Digitized by Google

accounts, undermined and exposed the prophecies, and ridiculed allegorical interpretations.[1] The moderns, it must be owned, have done great things, and shewn themselves able men; yet I cannot but regret the loss of what was done by a person of such vast abilities, and who lived so much nearer the fountain-head; though his authority survives his writings, and must still have its weight with impartial men, in spite of the enemies of truth.

*Cri.* Porphyry, I grant, was a thorough infidel, though he appears by no means to have been incredulous. It seems he had a great opinion of wizards and necromancers, and believed the mysteries, miracles, and prophecies of Theurgists and Egyptian priests. He was far from being an enemy to obscure jargon; and pretended to extraordinary ecstasies. In a word, this great man appears to have been as unintelligible as a schoolman, as superstitious as a monk, and as fanatical as any Quietist or Quaker; and, to complete his character as a minute philosopher, he was under strong temptations to lay violent hands on himself. We may frame a notion of this patriarch of infidelity by his judicious way of thinking upon other points as well as the Christian religion. So sagacious was he as to find out that the souls of insects, when separated from their bodies, became rational: that demons of a thousand shapes assist in making philtrums and charms, whose spiritual bodies are nourished and fattened by the steams of libations and sacrifices: that the ghosts of those who died violent deaths use to haunt and appear about their sepulchres. This same egregious philosopher adviseth a wise man not to eat flesh, lest the impure soul of the brute that was put to violent death should enter, along with the flesh, into those who eat it. He adds, as a matter of fact confirmed by many experiments, that those who would insinuate into themselves the souls of such animals as have the gift of foretelling things to come, need only eat a principal part, the heart, for instance, of a stag or a mole, and so receive the soul of the animal, which will prophesy in them like a god.[2] No wonder if men whose minds were preoccupied by faith and tenets of such a peculiar kind should

[1] Luc. Holstenius, "De Vita et Scriptis Porphyrii."

[2] *Vide* Porphyrium "De Abstinentia," "De Sacrificiis," "De Diis et Dæmonibus."

Digitized by Google

be averse from the reception of the gospel. Upon the whole, we desire to be excused if we do not pay the same deference to the judgment of men that appear to us whimsical, superstitious, weak, and visionary, which those impartial gentlemen do, who admire their talents, and are proud to tread in their footsteps.

*Alc.* Men see things in different views: what one admires another contemns: it is even possible for a prejudiced mind, whose attention is turned towards the faults and blemishes of things, to fancy some shadow of defect in those great lights which in our own days have enlightened, and still continue to enlighten, the world.

26. But pray tell me, Crito, what you think of Josephus. He is allowed to have been a man of learning and judgment. He was himself an assertor of revealed religion. And Christians, when his authority serves their turn, are used to cite him with respect.

*Cri.* All this I acknowledge.

*Alc.* Must it not then seem very strange, and very suspicious to every impartial inquirer, that this learned Jew, writing the history of his own country, of that very place, and those very times, where and when Jesus Christ made His appearance, should yet say nothing of the character, miracles, and doctrine of that extraordinary person? Some ancient Christians were so sensible of this that, to make amends, they inserted a famous passage in that historian; which imposture hath been sufficiently detected by able critics in the last age.

*Cri.* Though there are not wanting able critics on the other side of the question, yet, not to enter upon the discussion of that celebrated passage, I am content to give you all you can desire, and suppose it not genuine, but the pious fraud of some wrong-headed Christian, who could not brook the omission in Josephus. But this will never make such omission a real objection against Christianity. Nor is there, for aught I can see, anything in it whereon to ground either admiration or suspicion; inasmuch as it should seem very natural, supposing the gospel account exactly true, for Josephus to have said nothing of it; considering that the view of that writer was to give his country some figure in the

Digitized by Google

eye of the world, which had been greatly prejudiced against the Jews and knew little of their history, to which end the life and death of our Saviour would not in any wise have conduced; considering that Josephus could not have been an eye-witness of our Saviour or His miracles; considering that he was a Pharisee of quality and learning, foreign as well as Jewish, one of great employment in the state, and that the gospel was preached to the poor; that the first instruments of spreading it and the first converts to it were mean and illiterate, that it might not seem the work of man, or beholden to human interest or power; considering the general prejudice of the Jews, who expected in the Messiah a temporal and conquering prince; which prejudice was so strong, that they chose rather to attribute our Saviour's miracles to the devil, than acknowledge Him to be the Christ: considering also the hellish disorder and confusion of the Jewish state in the days of Josephus, when men's minds were filled and astonished with unparalleled wars, dissensions, massacres, and seditions of that devoted people. Laying all these things together, I do not think it strange that such a man, writing with such a view, at such a time, and in such circumstances, should omit to describe our blessed Saviour's life and death, or to mention His miracles, or to take notice of the state of the Christian church, which was then as a grain of mustard-seed beginning to take root and germinate. And this will seem still less strange, if it be considered that the apostles in a few years after our Saviour's death departed from Jerusalem, setting themselves to convert the gentiles, and were dispersed throughout the world; that the converts in Jerusalem were, not only of the meanest of the people, but also few; the three thousand added to the church in one day upon Peter's preaching in that city, appearing to have been not inhabitants but strangers from all parts assembled to celebrate the feast of Pentecost; and that all the time of Josephus and for several years after, during a succession of fifteen bishops, the Christians at Jerusalem observed the Mosaic law,[1] and were, consequently, in outward appearance, one people with the rest of the Jews, which must have made them less observable. I would fain know what reason we

[1] Sulp. Sever., "Sacr. Hist.," lib. ii., et Euseb., "Chron.," lib. poster.

Digitized by Google

have to suppose that the gospel, which in its first propagation seemed to overlook the great or considerable men of this world, might not also have been overlooked by them, as a thing not suited to their apprehensions and way of thinking? Besides, in those early times might not other learned Jews, as well as Gamaliel;[1] suspend their judgment of this new way, as not knowing what to make or say of it, being on one hand unable to quit the notions and traditions in which they were brought up, and, on the other, not daring to resist or speak against the gospel, lest they should be found to fight against God? Surely at all events, it could never be expected that an unconverted Jew should give the same account of the life, miracles, and doctrine of Jesus Christ as might become a Christian to have given; nor, on the other hand, was it at all improbable that a man of sense should beware to lessen or traduce what, for aught he knew, might have been a heavenly dispensation: between which two courses the middle was to say nothing, but pass it over in a doubtful or a respectful silence. And it is observable that where this historian occasionally mentions Jesus Christ, in his account of St. James's death, he doth it without any reflection, or saying either good or bad, though at the same time he shews a regard for the apostle. It is observable, I say, that, speaking of Jesus, his expression is, "who was called the Christ," not who pretended to be the Christ, or who was falsely called the Christ, but simply τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ.[2] It is evident Josephus knew there was such a man as Jesus, and that He was said to be the Christ, and yet he condemns neither him nor his followers; which to me seems an argument in their favour. Certainly if we suppose Josephus to have known or been persuaded that He was an impostor, it will be difficult to account for his not saying so in plain terms. But, if we suppose him in Gamaliel's way of thinking, who suspended his judgment, and was afraid of being found to fight against God, it should seem natural for him to behave in that very manner which according to you makes against our faith, but I verily think makes for it. But what if Josephus had been a bigot, or

[1] Acts, v.
[2] Josephus, "Ant.," lib. xx., cap. 8.

Digitized by Google

even a Sadducee, an infidel, an atheist? What then! we readily grant there might have been persons of rank, politicians, generals, and men of letters, then as well as now, Jews as well as Englishmen, who believed no revealed religion; and that some such persons might possibly have heard of a man in low life, who performed miracles by magic, without informing themselves, or perhaps ever inquiring, about his mission and doctrine. Upon the whole, I cannot comprehend why any man should conclude against the truth of the gospel from Josephus's omitting to speak of it, any more than from his omitting to embrace it. Had the first Christians been chief-priests and rulers, or men of science and learning, like Philo and Josephus, it might perhaps with better colour have been objected that their religion was of human contrivance, than now that it hath pleased God by weak things to confound the strong. This I think sufficiently accounts, why in the beginning the gospel might overlook or be overlooked by men of a certain rank and character.

27. *Alc.* And yet it seems an odd argument in proof of any doctrine, that it was preached by simple people to simple people.

*Cri.* Indeed if there was no other attestation to the truth of the Christian religion, this must be owned a very weak one. But if a doctrine begun by instruments, mean as to all human advantages, and making its first progress among those who had neither wealth, nor art, nor power to grace or encourage it, should in a short time, by its own innate excellency, the mighty force of miracles, and the demonstration of the Spirit, not only without but against all worldly motives, spread through the world, and subdue men of all ranks and conditions of life, would it not be very unreasonable to reject or suspect it, for the want of human means? And might not this with much better reason be thought an argument of its coming from God?

*Alc.* But still an inquisitive man will want the testimony of men of learning and knowledge.

*Cri.* But, from the first century onwards, there was never wanting the testimony of such men, who wrote learnedly in defence of the Christian religion, who lived, many of them,



Digitized by Google

when the memory of things was fresh, who had abilities to judge and means to know, and who gave the clearest proofs of their conviction and sincerity.

*Alc.* But all the while these men were Christians, prejudiced Christians, and therefore their testimony is to be suspected.

*Cri.* It seems then you would have Jews or heathens attest to the truths of Christianity?

*Alc.* That is the very thing I want.

*Cri.* But how can this be? Or, if it could, would not any rational man be apt to suspect such evidence, and ask how it was possible for a man really to believe such things himself and not become a Christian? The apostles and first converts were themselves Jews, and brought up in a veneration for the law of Moses, and in all the prejudices of that people: many Fathers, Christian philosophers, and learned apologists for the faith, who had been bred gentiles, were without doubt imbued with prejudices of education: and if the finger of God and force of truth converted both the one and the other from Judaism or gentilism, in spite of their prejudices to Christianity, is not their testimony so much the stronger? You have then the suffrages of both Jews and gentiles, attesting to the truth of our religion in the earliest ages. But to expect or desire the attestation of Jews remaining Jews, or of gentiles remaining gentiles, seems unreasonable: nor can it be imagined that the testimony of men, who were not converted themselves, should be the likeliest to convert others. We have indeed the testimony of heathen writers to prove that about the time of our Saviour's birth there was a general expectation in the east of a Messiah or Prince, who should found a new dominion: that there were such people as Christians: that they were cruelly persecuted and put to death: that they were innocent and holy in life and worship: and that there did really exist in that time certain persons and facts mentioned in the New Testament. And for other points, we have learned Fathers, several of whom had been, as I have already observed, bred heathens, to attest their truth.

*Alc.* For my part, I have no great opinion of the capacity or learning of the Fathers, and many learned men, especially of the reformed churches abroad, are of the same mind.

Digitized by Google

which saves me the trouble of looking myself into their voluminous writings.

*Cri.* I shall not take upon me to say, with the minute philosopher Pomponatius,[1] that Origen, Basil, Augustin, and divers other Fathers, were equal to Plato, Aristotle, and the greatest of the gentiles in human knowledge. But, if I may be allowed to make a judgment from what I have seen of their writings, I should think several of them men of great parts, eloquence, and learning, and much superior to those who seem to undervalue them. Without any affront to certain modern critics or translators, Erasmus may be allowed a man of fine taste, and a fit judge of sense and good writing, though his judgment in this point was very different from theirs. Some of our reformed brethren, because the Romanists attribute too much, seem to have attributed too little to them, from a very usual, though no very judicious, opposition; which is apt to lead men to remark defects, without making proper allowances, and to say things which neither piety, candour, nor good sense require them to say.

28. *Alc.* But, though I should acknowledge that a concurring testimony of many learned and able men throughout the first ages of Christianity may have its weight, yet when I consider the great number of forgeries and heresies that sprung up in those times, it very much weakens their credit.

*Cri.* Pray, Alciphron, would it be allowed a good argument in the mouth of a papist against the Reformation, that many absurd sects sprung up at the same time with it? Are we to wonder that, when good seed is sowing, the enemy should sow tares? But at once to cut off several objections, let us suppose in fact, what you do not deny possible, that there is a God, a devil, and a revelation from heaven committed to writing many centuries ago. Do but take a view of human nature, and consider what would probably follow from such a supposition; and whether it is not very likely there should be half-believers, mistaken bigots, holy frauds, ambitious, interested, disputing, conceited, schismatical, heretical, absurd men among the professors of such revealed religion; as well as, after a course of ages, various readings,

[1] Lib. "De Immortalitate Animæ."

Digitized by Google

omissions, transpositions, and obscurities in the text of the sacred oracles? And if so, I leave you to judge whether it be reasonable to make those events an objection against the being of a thing which would probably and naturally follow upon the supposal of its being?

*Alc.* After all, say what you will, this variety of opinions must needs shake the faith of a reasonable man. Where there are so many different opinions on the same point it is very certain they cannot all be true, but it is certain they may all be false. And the means to find out the truth? When a man of sense sets about this inquiry, he finds himself on a sudden startled and amused with hard words and knotty questions. This makes him abandon the pursuit, thinking the game not worth the chase.

*Cri.* But would not this man of sense do well to consider, it must argue want of discernment to reject Divine truths for the sake of human follies? Use but the same candour and impartiality in treating of religion that you would think proper on other subjects. We desire no more, and expect no less. In law, in physic, in politics, wherever men have refined, is it not evident they have been always apt to run into disputes and chicane? But will that hinder you from admitting there are many good rules, and just notions, and useful truths in all those professions? Physicians may dispute, perhaps vainly and unintelligibly, about the animal system: they may assign different causes of distempers, some explaining them by the elementary qualities, hot and cold, moist and dry, others by chemical, others by mechanical principles: yet this doth not hinder but the bark may be good for an ague, and rhubarb for a flux. Nor can it be inferred from the different sects which from time to time have sprung up in that profession, the dogmatic, for instance, empiric, methodic, Galenic, Paracelsian, or the hard words and knotty questions and idle theories which have grown from them, or been engrafted on them, that, therefore, we should deny the circulation of the blood, or reject their excellent rules about exercise, air, and diet.

*Alc.* It seems you would screen religion by the example of other professions, all which have produced sects and disputes as well as Christianity; which, according to you, may in itself be true and useful, notwithstanding many false and fruitless

Digitized by Google

notions engrafted on it by the wit of man. But certainly if this had been observed or believed by many acute reasoners, they would never have made the multiplicity of religious opinions and controversies an argument against religion in general.

*Cri.* How such an obvious truth should escape men of sense and inquiry I leave you to account: but I can very easily account for gross mistakes in those who pass for free-thinkers without ever thinking; or, if they do think, whose meditations are employed on other points of a very different nature from a serious and impartial inquiry about religion.

29. But to return: what or where is the profession of men, who never split into schisms, or never talk nonsense? Is it not evident that out of all the kinds of knowledge on which the human mind is employed there grow certain excrescences, which may be pared off, like the clippings of hair or nails in the body, and with no worse consequence? Whatever bigots or enthusiasts, whatever notional or scholastic divines may say or think, it is certain the faith derived from Christ and His apostles was not a piece of empty sophistry: they did not deliver and transmit down to us *κενὴν ἀπάτην*, but *γυμνὴν γνώμην*, to use the expression of a holy confessor.[1] And to pretend to demolish their foundation for the sake of human superstructure, be it hay or stubble or what it will, is no argument of just thought or reason; any more than it is of fairness to suppose a doubtful sense fixed, and argue from one side of the question in disputed points. Whether, for instance, the beginning of Genesis is to be understood in a literal or allegorical sense? Whether the book of Job be a history or a parable? Being points disputed between Christians, an infidel can have no right to argue from one side of the question in those or the like cases. This or that tenet of a sect, this or that controverted notion, is not what we contend for at present, but the General Faith taught by Christ and His apostles, and preserved by universal and perpetual tradition in all the churches down to our own times. To tax or strike at this Divine Doctrine, on account of things foreign and adventitious, the speculations and disputes of

[1] Socr., "Histor. Eccles.," lib. i.

Digitized by Google

curious men, is in my mind an absurdity of the same kind as it would be to cut down a fine tree, yielding fruit and shade, because its leaves afforded nourishment to caterpillars, or because spiders may now and then weave cobwebs among the branches.

*Alc.* To divide and distinguish would take time. We have several gentlemen very capable of judging in the gross, but that want attention for irksome and dry studies, or minute inquiries. To which, as it would be very hard to oblige men against their will, so it must be a great wrong to the world, as well as themselves, to debar them from the right of deciding according to their natural sense of things.

*Cri.* It were to be wished those capable men would employ their judgment and attention on the same objects. If theological inquiries are unpalatable, the field of nature is wide. How many discoveries are to be made! How many errors to be corrected in arts and sciences! How many vices to be reformed in life and manners! Why do men single out such points as are innocent and useful, when there are so many pernicious mistakes to be amended? Why set themselves to destroy the hopes of human kind and encouragements to virtue? Why delight to judge where they disdain to inquire? Why not employ their noble talents on the longitude or perpetual motion?

*Alc.* I wonder you should not see the difference between points of curiosity and religion. Those employ only men of a genius or humour suited to them. But all mankind have a right to censure, and are concerned to judge of these; except they will blindly submit to be governed by the stale wisdom of their ancestors, and the established laws of their country.

*Cri.* It should seem, if they are concerned to judge, they are not less concerned to examine before they judge.

*Alc.* But after all the examination and inquiry that mortal man can make about Revealed Religion, it is impossible to come at any rational sure footing. [1]Strange things are told us, and in proof thereof it is said that men have laid down their lives. But it may be easily conceived, and hath been often known, that men have died for the sake of opinions.

[1] From this point, to the end of Crito's speech (12 lines), was added to the third edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

the belief of which, whether right or wrong, had once possessed their minds.

*Cri.* I grant you may find instances of men dying for false opinions which they believed; but can you assign an instance of a man's dying for the sake of an opinion which he did not believe. The case is inconceivable; and yet this must have been the case, if the witnesses of Christ's miracles and resurrection are supposed impostors.

30. *Alc.* There is, indeed, a deal of specious talk about faith founded upon miracles. But when I examine this matter thoroughly, and trace Christian faith up to its original, I find it rests upon much darkness, and scruple, and uncertainty. Instead of points evident or agreeable to human reason, I find a wonderful narrative of the Son of God tempted in the wilderness by the devil, a thing utterly unaccountable, without any end, or use, or reason whatsoever. I meet with strange histories of apparitions of angels, and voices from heaven, with surprising accounts of demoniacs, things quite out of the road of common sense and observation, with several incredible feats said to have been done by Divine power, but more probably the inventions of men: nor the less likely to be so, because I cannot pretend to say with what view they were invented. Designs deeply laid are dark, and the less we know the more we suspect: but, admitting them for true, I shall not allow them to be miraculous, until I thoroughly know the power of what are called second causes, and the force of Magic.

*Cri.* You seem, Alciphron, to analyse, not faith, but infidelity, and trace it to its principles; which, from your own account, I collect to be dark and doubtful scruples and surmises, hastiness in judging, and narrowness in thinking, grounded on a fanciful notion which overrates the little scantling of your own experience, and on real ignorance of the views of Providence, and of the qualities, operations, and mutual respects of the several kinds of beings which are, or may be, for aught you know, in the universe. Thus obscure, uncertain, conceited, and conjectural are the principles of infidelity. Whereas, on the other hand, the principles of faith seem to be points plain and clear. It is a clear point that this faith in Christ was spread abroad throughout the world

Digitized by Google

soon after his death. It is a clear point that this was not effected by human learning, politics, or power. It is a clear point that in the early times of the church there were several men of knowledge and integrity, who embraced this faith not from any, but against all, temporal motives. It is a clear point that, the nearer they were to the fountain-head, the more opportunity they had to satisfy themselves as to the truth of those facts which they believed. It is a clear point that the less interest there was to persuade, the more need there was of evidence to convince them. It is a clear point that they relied on the authority of those who declared themselves eye-witnesses of the miracles and resurrection of Christ. It is a clear point that those professed eye-witnesses suffered much for this their attestation, and finally sealed it with their blood. It is a clear point that these witnesses, weak and contemptible as they were, overcame the world, spread more light, preached purer morals, and did more benefit to mankind than all the philosophers and sages put together.

These points appear to me clear and sure, and, being allowed such, they are plain, just, and reasonable motives of assent; they stand upon no fallacious ground, they contain nothing beyond our sphere, neither supposing more knowledge nor other faculties than we are really masters of; and, if they should not be admitted for morally certain, as I believe they will by fair and unprejudiced inquirers, yet the allowing them to be only probable is sufficient to stop the mouth of an infidel. These plain points, I say, are the pillars of our faith, and not those obscure ones by you supposed; which are in truth the unsound uncertain principles of infidelity, to a rash, prejudiced, and assuming spirit. To raise an argument or answer an objection from hidden powers of Nature or Magic is groping in the dark; but, by the evident light of sense, men might be sufficiently certified of sensible effects and matters of fact, such as the miracles and resurrection of Christ; and the testimony of such men may be transmitted to after ages, with the same moral certainty as other historical narrations; and those same miraculous facts, compared by reason with the doctrines they were brought to prove, do afford to an unbiassed mind strong indications of their coming from God, or a superior principle, whose Goodness retrieved the moral world, whose Power

Digitized by Google

commanded the natural, and whose Providence extended over both. Give me leave to say that nothing dark, nothing incomprehensible, or mysterious, or unaccountable, is the ground or motive, the principle or foundation, the proof or reason of our faith although it may be the object of it. For, it must be owned that, if by clear and sure principles we are rationally led to believe a point less clear, we do not therefore reject such point because it is mysterious to conceive, or difficult to account for; nor would it be right so to do. As for Jews and gentiles anciently attributing our Saviour's miracles to Magic, this is so far from being a proof against them that to me it seems rather a proof of the facts, without disproving the cause to which we ascribe them. As we do not pretend to know the nature and operations of demons, the history, laws, and system of rational beings, and the schemes or views of Providence, so far as to account for every action and appearance recorded in the gospel; so neither do you know enough of those things to be able, from that knowledge of yours, to object against accounts so well attested. It is an easy matter to raise scruples upon many authentic parts of civil history, which, requiring a more perfect knowledge of facts, circumstances, and councils than we can come at to explain them, must be to us inexplicable. And this is still more easy with respect to the history of Nature, in which, if surmises were admitted for proofs against things odd, strange, and unaccountable; if our scanty experience were made the rule and measure of truth, and all those phenomena rejected, that we, through ignorance of the principles, and laws, and system of nature, could not explain, we should indeed make discoveries, but it would be only of our own blindness and presumption. And why men that are so easily and so often gravelled in common points, in things natural and visible, should yet be so sharp-sighted and dogmatical about the invisible world and its mysteries is to me a point utterly unaccountable by all the rules of logic and good sense. Upon the whole, therefore, I cannot help thinking there are points sufficiently plain, and clear, and full, whereon a man may ground a reasonable faith in Christ: but that the attacks of minute philosophers against this faith are grounded upon darkness, ignorance, and presumption.

*Alc.* I doubt I shall still remain in the dark as to the

Digitized by Google

proofs of the Christian religion, and always presume there is nothing in them.

31. For, how is it possible, at this remote distance, to arrive at any knowledge, or frame any demonstration about it?

*Cri.* What then? Knowledge, I grant, in a strict sense, cannot be had without evidence or demonstration: but probable arguments are a sufficient ground of faith. Who ever supposed that scientifical proofs were necessary to make a Christian? Faith alone is required; and, provided that, in the main and upon the whole, men are persuaded, this saving faith may consist with some degrees of obscurity, scruple, and error. For, although the light of truth be unchangeable, and the same in its eternal source, the Father of Lights: yet, with respect to us, it is variously weakened and obscured, by passing through a long distance or gross medium, where it is intercepted, distorted, or tinctured, by the prejudices and passions of men. But, all this notwithstanding, he that will use his eyes may see enough for the purposes either of nature or of grace; though by a light, dimmer indeed, or clearer, according to the place, or the distance, or the hour, or the medium. And it will be sufficient if such analogy appears between the dispensations of grace and nature, as may make it probable (although much should be unaccountable in both) to suppose them derived from the same Author, and the workmanship of one and the same Hand.

*Alc.* Those who saw, and touched, and handled Jesus Christ after His resurrection, if there were any such, may be said to have seen by a clear light: but to us the light is very dim, and yet it is expected we should believe this point as well as they. For my part, I believe, with Spinosa, that Christ's death was literal, but His resurrection allegorical.[1]

*Cri.* And, for my part, I can see nothing in this celebrated infidel that should make me desert matters of fact, and moral evidence, to adopt his notions. Though I must needs own I admit an allegorical resurrection that proves the real: to

[1] *Vide* Spinosæ, "Epist. ad Oldenburgium."

Digitized by Google

wit, a resurrection of Christ's disciples from weakness to resolution, from fear to courage, from despair to hope, of which, for aught I can see, no rational account can be given, but the sensible evidence that our Lord was truly, really, and literally risen from the dead. But as it cannot be denied that His disciples, who were eye-witnesses of His miracles and resurrection, had stronger evidence than we can have of those points; so it cannot be denied, that such evidence was then more necessary, to induce men to embrace a new institution, contrary to the whole system of their education, their prejudices, their passions, their interests, and every human motive. Though to me it seems the moral evidence and probable arguments within our reach are abundantly sufficient to make prudent thinking men adhere to the faith handed down to us from our ancestors, established by the laws of our country, requiring submission in points above our knowledge, and for the rest recommending doctrines the most agreeable to our interest and our reason. And, however strong the light might have been at the fountain-head, yet its long continuance and propagation, by such unpromising instruments throughout the world, have been very wonderful. We may now take a more comprehensive view of the connexion, order, and progress of the Divine dispensations, and, by a retrospect on a long series of past ages, perceive a unity of design running throughout the whole, a gradual disclosing and fulfilling the purposes of Providence, a regular progress from types to antitypes, from things carnal to things spiritual, from earth to heaven. We may behold Christ crucified, that stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, putting a final period to the temple-worship of the one and the idolatry of the other, and that stone, which was cut out of the mountain without hands and brake in pieces all other kingdoms, become itself a great mountain.

32. If a due reflexion on these things be not sufficient to beget a reverence for the Christian faith in the minds of men, I should rather impute it to any other cause than a wise and cautious incredulity: when I see their easiness of faith in the common concerns of life, where there is no prejudice or appetite to bias or disturb their natural judgment: when I

Digitized by Google

see those very men that in religion will not stir a step without evidence, and at every turn expect demonstration, trust their health to a physician, their lives to a sailor, with an implicit faith, I cannot think they deserve the honour of being thought more incredulous than other men, or that they are more accustomed to know, and for this reason less inclined to believe. On the contrary, one is tempted to suspect that ignorance hath a greater share than science in our modern infidelity; and that it proceeds more from a wrong head, or an irregular will, than from deep researches.

*Lys.* We do not, it must be owned, think that learning or deep researches are necessary to pass right judgments upon things. I sometimes suspect that learning is apt to produce and justify whims, and sincerely believe we should do better without it. Our sect are divided on this point, but much the greater part think with me. I have heard more than once very observing men remark, that learning was the true human means which preserved religion in the world; and that, if we had it in our power to prefer blockheads in the church, all would soon be right.

*Cri.* Men must be strangely in love with their opinions, to put out their eyes rather than part with them. But it has been often remarked by observing men, that there are no greater bigots than infidels.

*Lys.* What! a free-thinker and a bigot—Impossible!

*Cri.* Not so impossible neither, that an infidel should be bigoted to his infidelity. Methinks I see a bigot wherever I see a man overbearing and positive without knowing why, laying the greatest stress on points of smallest moment, hasty to judge of the conscience, thoughts, and inward views of other men, impatient of reasoning against his own opinions, and choosing them with inclination rather than judgment, an enemy to learning, and attached to mean authorities. How far our modern infidels agree with this description, I leave to be considered by those who really consider and think for themselves.

*Lys.* We are no bigots; we are men that discover difficulties in religion, that tie knots and raise scruples, which disturb the repose and interrupt the golden dreams of bigots, who therefore cannot endure us.

Digitized by Google

*Cri.* They who cast about for difficulties will be sure to find or make them upon every subject; but he that would, upon the foot of reason, erect himself into a judge, in order to make a wise judgment on a subject of that nature, will not only consider the doubtful and difficult parts of it, but take a comprehensive view of the whole, consider it in all its parts and relations, trace it to its original, examine its principles, effects, and tendencies, its proofs internal and external. He will distinguish between the clear points and the obscure, the certain and the uncertain, the essential and circumstantial, between what is genuine and what foreign. He will consider the different sorts of proof that belong to different things; where evidence is to be expected, where probability may suffice, and where it is reasonable to suppose there should be doubts and scruples. He will proportion his pains and exactness to the importance of the inquiry, and check that disposition of his mind to conclude all those notions, groundless prejudices, with which it was imbued before it knew the reason of them. He will silence his passions, and listen to truth. He will endeavour to untie knots as well as tie them, and dwell rather on the light parts of things than the obscure. He will balance the force of his understanding with the difficulty of the subject, and, to render his judgment impartial, hear evidence on all sides, and, so far as he is led by authority, choose to follow that of the honestest and wisest men. Now, it is my sincere opinion, the Christian religion may well stand the test of such an inquiry.

*Lys.* But such an inquiry would cost too much pains and time. We have thought of another method—the bringing religion to the test of wit and humour: this we find a much shorter, easier, and more effectual way. And, as all enemies are at liberty to choose their weapons, we make choice of those we are most expert at: and we are the better pleased with this choice, having observed that of all things a solid divine hates a jest.

*Euph.* [1]To consider the whole of the subject, to read and think on all sides, to object plainly, and answer directly, upon the foot of dry reason and argument, would be a very

[1] This speech is given to Lysicles in the first edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

tedious and troublesome affair. Besides, it is attacking pedants at their own weapons. How much more delicate and artful is it, to give a hint, to cover one's-self with an enigma, to drop a *double entendre*, to keep it in one's power to recover, and slip aside, and leave his antagonist beating the air!

*Lys.* This hath been practised with great success, and I believe it the top method to gain proselytes, and confound pedants.

*Cri.* I have seen several things written in this way, which, I suppose, were copied from the behaviour of a sly sort of scorners one may sometimes meet with. Suppose a conceited man that would pass for witty, tipping the wink upon one, thrusting out his tongue at another; one while waggishly smiling, another with a grave mouth and ludicrous eyes; often affecting the countenance of one who smothered a jest, and sometimes bursting out in a horse-laugh: what a figure would this be, I will not say in the senate or council, but in a private visit among well-bred men! And yet this is the figure that certain great authors, who in this age would pass for models, and do pass for models, make in their polite and elaborate writings on the most weighty points.[1]

*Alc.* I who profess myself an admirer, an adorer of reason, am obliged to own that in some cases the sharpness of ridicule can do more than the strength of argument. But if we exert ourselves in the use of mirth and humour, it is not for want of other weapons. It shall never be said that a free-thinker was afraid of reasoning. No, Crito, we have reasons in store, the best are yet to come; and if we can find an hour for another conference before we set out to-morrow morning, I will undertake you shall be plied with reasons, as clear, and home, and close to the point as you could wish.

[1] See Shaftesbury, "Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour." "Characteristics," vol. i., p. 59, *et seq.*—ED.

Digitized by Google

# THE SEVENTH DIALOGUE.[1]

1. Christian faith impossible. 2. Words stand for ideas. 3. No knowledge or faith without ideas. 4. Grace, no idea of it. 5. Suggesting ideas not the only use of words. 6. Force as difficult to form an idea of as grace. 7. Notwithstanding which, useful propositions may be formed concerning it. 8. Belief of the Trinity and other mysteries not absurd. 9. Mistakes about faith an occasion of profane raillery. 10. Faith, its true nature and effects. 11. Illustrated by science. 12. By arithmetic in particular. 13. Sciences conversant about signs. 14. The true end of speech, reason, science, and faith. 15. Metaphysical objections as strong against human science as articles of faith. 16. No religion, because no human liberty. 17. Further proof against human liberty. 18. Fatalism a consequence of erroneous suppositions. 19. Man an accountable agent. 20. Inconsistency, singularity, and credulity of minute philosophers. 21. Untrodden paths and new light of the minute philosophers. 22. Sophistry of the minute philosophers. 23. Minute philosophers ambiguous, enigmatical, unfathomable. 24. Scepticism of the minute philosphers. 25. How a sceptic ought to behave. 26. Minute philosophers, why difficult to convince. 27. Thinking, not the epidemical evil of these times. 28. Infidelity not an effect of reason or thought: its true motives assigned. 29. Variety of opinions about religion, effects thereof. 30. Method for proceeding with minute philosophers. 31. Want of thought and want of education defects of the present age.

## I.

THE philosophers having resolved to set out for London next morning, we assembled at break of day in the library.

Alciphron began with a declaration of his sincerity, assuring us he had very maturely and with a most unbiassed

[1] In this dialogue the final position is reached,—that the Christian religion contains nothing that is repugnant to sense and reason. The constructive skill shown in the insensible conduct of the argument through its distinct stages to this conclusion, cannot sufficiently be admired. The whole work is a wellnigh perfect example of the philosophical dialogue as a literary form.

Digitized by Google

mind considered all that had been said the day before. He added that upon the whole he could not deny several probable reasons were produced for embracing the Christian faith. But, said he, those reasons being only probable, can never prevail against absolute certainty and demonstration. If, therefore, I can demonstrate your religion to be a thing altogether absurd and inconsistent, your probable arguments in its defence do from that moment lose their force, and with it all right to be answered or considered. The concurring testimony of sincere and able witnesses hath without question great weight in human affairs. I will even grant that things odd and unaccountable to human judgment or experience may sometimes claim our assent on that sole motive. And I will also grant it possible for a tradition to be conveyed with moral evidence through many centuries. But at the same time you will grant to me that a thing demonstrably and palpably false is not to be admitted on any testimony whatever, which at best can never amount to demonstration. To be plain, no testimony can make nonsense sense: no moral evidence can make contradictions consistent. Know, then, that as the strength of our cause doth not depend upon, so neither is it to be decided by any critical points of history, chronology, or languages. You are not to wonder, if the same sort of tradition and moral proof which governs our assent with respect to fact in civil or natural history is not admitted as a sufficient voucher for metaphysical absurdities and absolute impossibilities. Things obscure and unaccountable in human affairs or the operations of nature may yet be possible, and, if well attested, may be assented unto; but religious assent or Faith can be evidently shewn in its own nature to be impracticable, impossible, and absurd. This is the primary motive to infidelity. This is our citadel and fortress, which may, indeed, be graced with outworks of various erudition, but, if those are demolished, remains in itself and of its own proper strength impregnable.

*Euph.* This, it must be owned, reduceth our inquiry within a narrow compass: do but make out this, and I shall have nothing more to say.

*Alc.* Know, then, that the shallow mind of the vulgar, as it dwells only on the outward surface of things, and considers

Digitized by Google

them in the gross, may be easily imposed on. Hence a blind reverence for religious Faith and Mystery. But when an acute philosopher comes to dissect and analyse these points, the imposture plainly appears; and as he has no blindness, so he has no reverence for empty notions, or, to speak more properly, for mere forms of speech, which mean nothing, and are of no use to mankind.

2. Words are signs: they do or should stand for ideas; which so far as they suggest they are significant. But words that suggest no ideas are insignificant. He who annexeth a clear idea to every word he makes use of speaks sense; but where such ideas are wanting, the speaker utters nonsense. In order therefore to know whether any man's speech be senseless and insignificant, we have nothing to do but lay aside the words, and consider the ideas suggested by them. Men, not being able immediately to communicate their ideas one to another, are obliged to make use of sensible signs or words; the use of which is to raise those ideas in the hearer which are in the mind of the speaker; and if they fail of this end they serve to no purpose. He who really thinks hath a train of ideas succeeding each other and connected in his mind; and when he expresseth himself by discourse each word suggests a distinct idea to the hearer or reader; who by that means hath the same train of ideas in his which was in the mind of the speaker or writer. As far as this effect is produced, so far the discourse is intelligible, hath sense and meaning. Hence it follows that whoever can be supposed to understand what he reads or hears must have a train of ideas raised in his mind, correspondent to the train of words read or heard. These plain truths, to which men readily assent in theory, are but little attended to in practice, and therefore deserve to be enlarged on and inculcated, however obvious and undeniable. Mankind are generally averse from thinking, though apt enough to entertain discourse either in themselves or others: the effect whereof is that their minds are rather stored with names than ideas, the husk of science rather than the thing. And yet these words without meaning do often make distinctions of parties, the subject-matter of their disputes, and the object of their zeal. This is the most general cause of error, which doth not influence ordinary



Digitized by Google

minds alone, but even those who pass for acute and learned philosophers are often employed about names instead of things or ideas, and are supposed to know when they only pronounce hard words without a meaning.

3. Though it is evident that, as knowledge is the perception of the connexion or disagreement between ideas, he who doth not distinctly perceive the ideas marked by the terms, so as to form a mental proposition answering to the verbal, cannot possibly have knowledge. No more can he be said to have opinion or faith; which imply a weaker assent, but still it must be to a proposition, the terms of which are understood as clearly, although the agreement or disagreement of the ideas may not be so evident, as in the case of knowledge. I say, all degrees of assent, whether founded on reason or authority, more or less cogent, are internal acts of the mind, which alike terminate in ideas as their proper object; without which there can be really no such thing as knowledge, faith, or opinion. We may perhaps raise a dust and dispute about tenets purely verbal; but what is this at bottom more than mere trifling? All which will be easily admitted with respect to human learning and science; wherein it is an allowed method to expose any doctrine or tenet by stripping them of the words, and examining what ideas are underneath, or whether any ideas at all? This is often found the shortest way to end disputes, which might otherwise grow and multiply without end, the litigants neither understanding one another nor themselves. It were needless to illustrate what shines by its own light, and is admitted by all thinking men. My endeavour shall be only to apply it in the present case. I suppose I need not be at any pains to prove that the same rules of reason and good sense which obtain in all other subjects ought to take place in religion. As for those who consider faith and reason as two distinct provinces, and would have us think good sense has nothing to do where it is most concerned, I am resolved never to argue with such men, but leave them in quiet possession of their prejudices.

And now, for the particular application of what I have said, I shall not single out any nice disputed points of school divinity, or those that relate to the nature and essence of

Digitized by Google

God, which, being allowed infinite, you might pretend to screen them under the general notion of difficulties attending the nature of Infinity.

4. *Grace* is the main point in the Christian dispensation; nothing is oftener mentioned or more considered throughout the New Testament; wherein it is represented as somewhat of a very particular kind, distinct from anything revealed to the Jews, or known by the light of nature. This same grace is spoken of as the gift of God, as coming by Jesus Christ, as reigning, as abounding, as operating. Men are said to speak through grace, to believe through grace. Mention is made of the glory of grace, the riches of grace, the stewards of grace. Christians are said to be heirs of grace, to receive grace, grow in grace, be strong in grace, to stand in grace, and to fall from grace. And lastly, grace is said to justify and to save them. Hence Christianity is styled the covenant or dispensation of grace. And it is well known that no point hath created more controversy in the church than this doctrine of grace. What disputes about its nature, extent, and effects, about universal, efficacious, sufficient, preventing, irresistible grace, have employed the pens of Protestant as well as Popish divines, of Jansenists and Molinists, of Lutherans, Calvinists, and Arminians, as I have not the least curiosity to know, so I need not say. It sufficeth to observe, that there have been and are still subsisting great contests upon these points. Only one thing I should desire to be informed of, to wit, What is the clear and distinct *idea* marked by the word grace? I presume a man may know the bare meaning of a term, without going into the depth of all those learned inquiries. This surely is an easy matter, provided there is an idea annexed to such term. And if there is not, it can be neither the subject of a rational dispute, nor the object of real faith. Men may indeed impose upon themselves or others, and pretend to argue and believe, when at bottom there is no argument or belief, further than mere verbal trifling. Grace taken in the vulgar sense, either for beauty, or favour, I can easily understand. But when it denotes an active, vital, ruling principle, influencing and operating on the mind of man, distinct from every natural power or motive, I profess myself altogether unable to understand it, or frame

Digitized by Google

any distinct idea of it; and therefore I cannot assent to any proposition concerning it, nor consequently have any faith about it: and it is a self-evident truth, that God obligeth no man to impossibilities. At the request of a philosophical friend, I did cast an eye on the writings he shewed me of some divines, and talked with others on this subject, but after all I had read or heard could make nothing of it, having always found, whenever I laid aside the word *grace*, and looked into my own mind, a perfect vacuity or privation of all ideas. And, as I am apt to think men's minds and faculties are made much alike, I suspect that other men, if they examine what they call grace with the same exactness and indifference, would agree with me, that there was nothing in it but an empty name. This is not the only instance where a word often heard and pronounced is believed intelligible, for no other reason but because it is familiar. Of the same kind are many other points reputed necessary articles of faith. That which in the present case imposeth upon mankind I take to be partly this. Men speak of this holy principle as of something that acts, moves, and determines, taking their ideas from corporeal things, from motion and the force or *momentum* of bodies, which, being of an obvious and sensible nature, they substitute in place of a thing spiritual and incomprehensible, which is a manifest delusion. For, though the idea of corporeal force be never so clear and intelligible, it will not therefore follow that the idea of grace, a thing perfectly incorporeal, must be so too. And though we may reason distinctly, perceive, assent, and form opinions about the one, it will by no means follow that we can do so of the other. Thus, it comes to pass that a clear sensible idea of what is real produceth, or rather is made a pretence for, an imaginary spiritual faith that terminates in no object: a thing impossible! For there can be no assent where there are no ideas: and where there is no assent there can be no faith: and what cannot be, that no man is obliged to. This is as clear as anything in Euclid![1]

[1] A most important alteration was made here in the last edition. The three subjoined sections were entirely omitted. This seems to indicate that as Berkeley grew older he modified the Nominalism so strongly expressed here and in his earlier philosophical works. For convenience of reference the index contains in brackets the numbering of

Digitized by Google

5. *Euph.* Be the use of words or names what it will, I can never think it is to do things impossible. Let us then inquire what it is? and see if we can make sense of our daily

sections according to the earlier editions. These are the omitted sections:

"5. The same method of reasoning may be applied by any man of sense to confute all other the most essential articles of the Christian faith. You are not therefore to wonder that a man who proceeds on such solid grounds, such clear and evident principles, should be deaf to all you can say from moral evidence, or probable arguments, which are nothing in the balance against demonstration.

"*Euph.* The more light and force there are in this discourse, the more you are to blame for not having produced it sooner. For my part, I should never have said one word against evidence. But let me see whether I understand you rightly. You say, every word in an intelligible discourse must stand for an idea; which ideas as far as they are clearly and distinctly apprehended, so far the discourse hath meaning, without which it is useless and insignificant.

"*Alc.* I do.

"*Euph.* For instance, when I hear the word *man*, *triangle*, *colour*, pronounced, they must excite in my mind distinct ideas of those things whereof they are signs; otherwise I cannot be said to understand them.

"*Alc.* Right.

"*Euph.* And this is the only true use of language.

"*Alc.* That is what I affirm.

"*Euph.* But every time the word *man* occurs in reading or conversation, I am not conscious that the particular distinct *idea* of a man is excited in my mind. For instance, when I read in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians these words, 'If a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself,' methinks I comprehend the force and meaning of this proposition, although I do not frame to myself the particular distinct idea of a man.

"*Alc.* It is very true you do not form in your mind the particular idea of Peter, James, or John, of a fair or a black, a tall or a low, a fat or a lean, a straight or a crooked, a wise or a foolish, a sleeping or a waking man; but the abstract general idea of *man*, prescinding from and exclusive of all particular shape, size, complexion, passions, faculties, and every individual circumstance.

"To explain this matter more fully, you are to understand there is in the human mind a faculty of contemplating the general nature of things, separate from all those particularities which distinguish the individuals one from another. For example, in Peter, James, and John, you may observe in each a certain collection of stature, figure, colour, and other peculiar properties by which they are known asunder, distinguished from all other men, and, if I may so say, individuated. Now, leaving out of the idea of a man that which is peculiar to the individual, and retaining only that which is common to all men, you form an abstract universal idea of *man* or *human nature*, which includes no particular stature, shape, colour, or other quality, whether of mind or body. After

Digitized by Google

practice. Words, it is agreed, are signs: it may not therefore be amiss to examine the use of other signs, in order to know that of words. Counters, for instance, at a card-table

the same manner you may observe particular triangles to differ one from another, as their sides are equal or unequal, and their angles greater or lesser; whence they are denominated equilateral, equicrural, or scalenum, obtusangular, acutangular, or rectangular. But the mind, excluding out of its ideas all these peculiar properties and distinctions, framed the general abstract idea of a *triangle*, which is neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenum, neither obtusangular, acutangular, nor rectangular; but all and none of these at once (See Locke, 'On Human Understanding,' bk. iv., ch. 7.) The same may be said of the general abstract idea of *colour*, which is something distinct from and exclusive of blue, red, green, yellow, and every other particular colour, including only that general essence in which they all agree. And what has been said of these three general names, and the abstract general ideas they stand for, may be applied to all others. For you must know that particular things or ideas being infinite, if each were marked or signified by a distinct proper name, words must have been innumerable, and language an endless impossible thing. Hence it comes to pass that appellative or general names stand, immediately and properly, not for particular but for abstract general ideas, which they never fail to excite in the mind, as oft as they are used to any significant purpose. And without this there could be no communication or enlargement of knowledge, no such thing as universal science or theorems of any kind. Now, for understanding any proposition or discourse, it is sufficient that distinct ideas are thereby raised in your mind, correspondent to those in the speaker's, whether the ideas so raised are particular, or only abstract and general ideas. Forasmuch, nevertheless, as these are not so obvious and familiar to vulgar minds, it happens that some men may think they have no idea at all, when they have not a particular idea; but the truth is, you had the abstract general idea of man, in the instance assigned, wherein you thought you had none. After the same manner, when it is said that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones; or that colour is the object of sight, it is evident the words do not stand for this or that triangle or colour, but for *abstract* general ideas, excluding everything peculiar to the individuals, and including only the Universal Nature common to the whole kind of triangles or of colours.

"6. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, are those abstract general ideas clear and distinct?

"*Alc.* They are above all others clear and distinct, being the only proper object of science, which is altogether conversant about Universals.

"*Euph.* And do you not think it very possible for any man to know whether he has this or that clear and distinct idea or no?

"*Alc.* Doubtless. To know this he needs only examine his own thoughts and look into his own mind.

"*Euph.* But, upon looking into my own mind, I do not find that I

Digitized by Google

are used, not for their own sake, but only as signs substituted for money, as words are for ideas. Say now, Alciphron, is it necessary every time these counters are used throughout the

have or can have these general abstract ideas of a man or a triangle above-mentioned, or of colour prescinded from all particular colours. (See the 'Introduction' to a 'Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge,' printed in the year 1710, where the absurdity of abstract ideas is fully considered.) Though I shut mine eyes, and use mine utmost efforts, and reflect on all that passeth in my own mind, I find it utterly impossible to form such ideas.

"*Alc.* To reflect with due attention and turn the mind inward upon itself is a difficult task, and not every one's talent.

"*Euph.* Not to insist on what you allowed—that every one might easily know for himself whether he has this or that idea or no, I am tempted to think nobody else can form those ideas any more than I can. Pray, Alciphron, which are those things you would call absolutely impossible?

"*Alc.* Such as include a contradiction.

"*Euph.* Can you frame an idea of what includes a contradiction?

"*Alc.* I cannot.

"*Euph.* Consequently, whatever is absolutely impossible you cannot form an idea of?

"*Alc.* This I grant.

"*Euph.* But can a colour or triangle, such as you describe their abstract general ideas, really exist?

"*Alc.* It is absolutely impossible such things should exist in nature.

"*Euph.* Should it not follow, then, that they cannot exist in your mind, or, in other words, that you cannot conceive or frame an idea of them?

"*Alc.* You seem, Euphranor, not to distinguish between pure intellect and imagination. Abstract general ideas I take to be the object of pure intellect, which may conceive them, although they cannot perhaps be imagined.

"*Euph.* I do not perceive that I can by any faculty, whether of intellect or imagination, conceive or frame an idea of that which is impossible and includes a contradiction. And I am very much at a loss to account for your admitting that in common instances, which you would make an argument against Divine faith and mysteries.

"7. *Alc.* There must be some mistake in this. How is it possible there should be general knowledge without general propositions, or these without general names, which cannot be without general ideas by standing for which they become general?

"*Euph.* But may not words become general by being made to stand indiscriminately for all particular ideas, which, from a mutual resemblance, belong to the same kind—without the intervention of any abstract general idea?

"*Alc.* Is there, then, no such thing as a general idea?

"*Euph.* May we not admit general ideas though we should not admit

Digitized by Google

progress of a game, to frame an idea of the distinct sum or value that each represents?

*Alc.* By no means: it is sufficient the players first agree on their respective values, and at last substitute those values in their stead.

*Euph.* And in casting up a sum, where the figures stand for pounds, shillings, and pence, do you think it necessary, throughout the whole progress of the operation, in each step to form ideas of pounds, shillings, and pence?

*Alc.* I do not; it will suffice if in the conclusion those figures direct our actions with respect to things.

*Euph.* From hence it seems to follow, that words may not be insignificant, although they should not, every time they are used, excite the ideas they signify in our minds; it being sufficient that we have it in our power to substitute things or ideas for their signs when there is occasion. It seems also to follow, that there may be another use of words besides that of marking and suggesting distinct ideas, to wit, the influencing our conduct and actions; which may be done either by forming rules for us to act by, or by raising certain passions, dispositions, and emotions in our minds. A dis-

them to be made by abstraction, or though we should not allow of general abstract ideas? To me it seems a particular idea may become general by being used to stand for or represent other ideas; and that general knowledge is conversant about signs or general ideas made such by their signification; and which are considered rather in their relative capacity, and as substituted for others, than in their own nature, or for their own sake. A black line, for instance, an inch long, though in itself particular, may yet become universal, being used as a sign to stand for any line whatsoever.

"*Alc.* It is your opinion, then, that words become general by representing an indefinite number of particular ideas?

"*Euph.* It seems so to me.

"*Alc.* Whenever, therefore, I hear a general name, it must be supposed to excite some one or other particular idea of that species in my mind.

"*Euph.* I cannot say so neither. Pray, Alciphron, doth it seem to you necessary that, as often as the word *man* occurs in reading or discourse, you must form in your mind the idea of a particular man?

"*Alc.* I own it doth not: and, not finding particular ideas always suggested by the words, I was led to think I had abstract general ideas suggested by them. And this is the opinion of all thinking men, who are agreed the only use of words is to suggest ideas. And indeed what other use can we assign them?"

Digitized by Google

course, therefore, that directs how to act or excite to the doing or forbearance of an action may, it seems, be useful and significant, although the words whereof it is composed should not bring each a distinct idea into our minds.

*Alc.* It seems so.

*Euph.* Pray tell me, Alciphron, is not an idea altogether inactive?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* An agent therefore, an active mind, or spirit cannot be an idea, or like an idea. Whence it should seem to follow that those words which denote an active principle, soul, or spirit do not, in a strict and proper sense, stand for ideas. And yet they are not insignificant neither; since I understand what is signified by the term *I*, or *myself*, or know what it means, although it be no idea, nor like an idea, but that which thinks, and wills, and apprehends ideas, and operates about them. [1] Certainly it must be allowed that we have some notion, that we understand, or know what is meant by, the terms *myself*, *will*, *memory*, *love*, *hate* and so forth; although to speak exactly, these words do not suggest so many distinct ideas.

*Alc.* What would you infer from this?

*Euph.* What hath been inferred already—that words may be significant, although they do not stand for ideas.[2] The contrary whereof having been presumed seems to have produced the doctrine of abstract ideas.

*Alc.* Will you not allow then that the mind can abstract?

*Euph.* I do not deny it may abstract in a certain sense; inasmuch as those things that can really exist, or be really perceived asunder, may be conceived asunder, or abstracted one from the other; for instance, a man's head from his body, colour from motion, figure from weight. But it will not thence follow that the mind can frame abstract general ideas, which appear to be impossible.

*Alc.* And yet it is a current opinion that every substantive name marks out and exhibits to the mind one distinct idea separate from all others.

[1] From this point to the end of the speech (five lines) was added to the third edition.—ED.

[2] See the "Principles of Human Knowledge," sect. 135, and the "Introduction," sect. 20.

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* Pray, Alciphron, is not the word *number* such a substantive name?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* Do but try now whether you can frame an idea of number in abstract, exclusive of all signs, words, and things numbered. I profess for my own part I cannot.

*Alc.* Can it be so hard a matter to form a simple idea of number, the object of a most evident demonstrable science? Hold, let me see if I cannot abstract the idea of number from the numerical names and characters, and all particular numerical things.—Upon which Alciphron paused awhile, and then said, To confess the truth I do not find that I can.

*Euph.* But, though it seems neither you nor I can form distinct simple *ideas* of number, we can nevertheless make a very proper and significant use of numeral *names*. They direct us in the disposition and management of our affairs, and are of such necessary use, that we should not know how to do without them. And yet, if other men's faculties may be judged by mine, to obtain a precise simple abstract idea of number, is as difficult as to comprehend any mystery in religion.

6. But, to come to your own instance, let us examine what idea we can frame of *force* abstracted from body, motion, and outward sensible effects. For myself I do not find that I have or can have any such idea.

*Alc.* Surely every one knows what is meant by force.

*Euph.* And yet I question whether every one can form a distinct idea of force. Let me entreat you, Alciphron, be not amused by terms: lay aside the *word* force, and exclude every other thing from your thoughts, and then see what precise *idea* you have of force.

*Alc.* Force is that in bodies which produces motion and other sensible effects.

*Euph.* Is it then something distinct from those effects?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* Be pleased now to exclude the consideration of its subject and effects, and contemplate force itself in its own precise idea.

*Alc.* I profess I find it no such easy matter.

*Euph.* Take your own advice, and shut your eyes to assist

Digitized by Google

your meditation.—Upon this, Alciphron, having closed his eyes and mused a few minutes, declared he could make nothing of it.

And that, replied Euphranor, which it seems neither you nor I can frame an idea of, by your own remark of men's minds and faculties being made much alike, we may suppose others have no more an idea of than we.

*Alc.* We may.

*Euph.* But, notwithstanding all this, it is certain there are many speculations, reasonings, and disputes, refined subtilties, and nice distinctions about this same force. And to explain its nature, and to distinguish the several notions or kinds of it, the terms *gravity*, *reaction*, *vis inertiæ*, *vis insita*, *vis impressa*, *vis mortua*, *vis viva*, *impetus*, *momentum*, *solicitatio*, *conatus*, and divers other such-like expressions, have been used by learned men: and no small controversies have arisen about the notions or definitions of these terms. It had puzzled men to know whether force is spiritual or corporeal; whether it remains after action; how it is transferred from one body to another. Strange paradoxes have been framed about its nature, properties, and proportions: for instance, that contrary forces may at once subsist in the same quiescent body: that the force of percussion in a small particle is infinite. For which, and other curiosities of the same sort, you may consult Borellus "De Vi Percussionis," the "Lezioni Academiche" of Torricelli, the "Exercitations" of Hermanus, and other writers. It is well known to the learned world what a controversy hath been carried on between mathematicians, particularly Monsieur Leibnitz and Monsieur Papin, in the Leipsic "Acta Eruditorum," about the proportion of forces: whether they be each to other in a proportion compounded of the simple proportions of the bodies and the celerities, or in one compounded of the simple proportion of the bodies and the duplicate proportion of the celerities? A point, it seems, not yet agreed: as indeed the reality of the thing itself is made a question. Leibnitz distinguisheth between the *nisus elementaris*, and the *impetus* which is formed by a repetition of the *nisus elementaris*, and seems to think they do not exist in nature, but are made only by an abstraction of the mind. The same author, treating of original active force, to illustrate his subject, hath recourse

Digitized by Google

to the substantial forms and *entelecheia* of Aristotle. And the ingenious Torricelli saith of force and impetus, that they are subtle abstracts and spiritual quintessences; and concerning the *momentum* and the velocity of heavy bodies falling, he saith they are *un certo che*, and *un non so che;* that is, in plain English, he knows not what to make of them. Upon the whole, therefore, may we not pronounce that—excluding body, time, space, motion, and all its sensible measures and effects—we shall find it as difficult to form an idea of force as of grace?

*Alc.* I do not know what to think of it.

7. *Euph.* And yet, I presume, you allow there are very evident propositions or theorems relating to force, which contain useful truths: for instance, that a body with conjunct forces describes the diagonal of a parallelogram, in the same time that it would the sides with separate. Is not this a principle of very extensive use? Doth not the doctrine of the composition and resolution of forces depend upon it, and, in consequence thereof, numberless rules and theorems directing men how to act, and explaining phenomena throughout the Mechanics and mathematical Philosophy? And if, by considering this doctrine of force, men arrive at the knowledge of many inventions in Mechanics, and are taught to frame engines, by means of which things difficult and otherwise impossible may be performed; and if the same doctrine which is so beneficial here below serveth also as a key to discover the nature of the celestial motions; shall we deny that it is of use, either in practice or speculation, because we have no distinct idea of force? Or that which we admit with regard to *force*, upon what pretence can we deny concerning *grace?* If there are queries, disputes, perplexities, diversity of notions and opinions about the one, so there are about the other also: if we can form no precise distinct idea of the one, so neither can we of the other. Ought we not therefore, by a parity of reason, to conclude there may be divers true and useful propositions concerning the one as well as the other? And that grace may, for aught you know, be an object of our faith, and influence our life and actions, as a principle destructive of evil habits and productive of good ones, although we cannot attain a distinct *idea* of it.

Digitized by Google

separate or abstracted from God the author, from man the subject, and from virtue and piety its effects?[1]

8. Shall we not admit the same method of arguing, the same rules of logic, reason, and good sense, to obtain in things spiritual and things corporeal, in faith and science? and shall we not use the same candour, and make the same allowances, in examining the revelations of God and the inventions of men? For aught I see, that philosopher cannot be free from bias and prejudice, or be said to weigh things in an equal balance, who shall maintain the doctrine of force and reject that of grace, who shall admit the abstract idea of a triangle, and at the same time ridicule the Holy Trinity. But, however partial or prejudiced other minute philosophers might be, you have laid it down for a maxim, that the same logic which obtains in other matters must be admitted in religion.

*Lys.* I think, Alciphron, it would be more prudent to abide by the way of wit and humour than thus to try religion by the dry test of reason and logic.

*Alc.* Fear not: by all the rules of right reason, it is absolutely impossible that any mystery, and least of all the Trinity, should really be the object of man's faith.

*Euph.* I do not wonder you thought so, as long as you maintained that no man could assent to a proposition without perceiving or framing in his mind distinct ideas marked by the terms of it. But, although terms are signs, yet having granted that those signs may be significant, though they should not suggest ideas represented by them, provided they serve to regulate and influence our wills, passions, or conduct, you have consequently granted that the mind of man may assent to propositions containing such terms, when it is so directed or affected by them, notwithstanding it should not perceive distinct ideas marked by those terms. Whence it seems to follow that a man may believe the doctrine of the Trinity, if he finds it revealed in Holy Scripture that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are God, and that there is but one God, although he doth not frame

[1] The preceding paragraphs on grace and force were attacked by Browne in his "Analogy," pp. 515-554. See Introductory note to Dialogue iv.—ED.

Digitized by Google

in his mind any abstract or distinct ideas of trinity, substance, or personality; provided that this doctrine of a Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier makes proper impressions on his mind, producing therein love, hope, gratitude, and obedience, and thereby becomes a lively operative principle, influencing his life and actions, agreeably to that notion of saving faith which is required in a Christian. This, I say, whether right or wrong, seems to follow from your own principles and concessions. But, for further satisfaction, it may not be amiss to inquire whether there be anything parallel to this Christian faith in the minute philosophy. Suppose a fine gentleman or lady of fashion, who are too much employed to think for themselves, and are only free-thinkers at second-hand, have the advantage of being betimes initiated in the principles of your sect, by conversing with men of depth and genius, who have often declared it to be their opinion, the world is governed either by fate or by chance, it matters not which; will you deny it possible for such persons to yield their assent to either of these propositions?

*Alc.* I will not.

*Euph.* And may not such an assent be properly called *faith*?

*Alc.* It may.

*Euph.* And yet it is possible those disciples of the minute philosophy may not dive so deep as to be able to frame any abstract, or precise, or any determinate idea whatsoever, either of fate or of chance?

*Alc.* This too I grant.

*Euph.* So that, according to you, this same gentleman or lady may be said to believe or have faith where they have not ideas?

*Alc.* They may.

*Euph.* And may not this faith or persuasion produce real effects, and shew itself in the conduct and tenor of their lives, freeing them from the fears of superstition, and giving them a true relish of the world, with a noble indolence or indifference about what comes after?

*Alc.* It may.

*Euph.* And may not Christians, with equal reason, be allowed to believe the Divinity of our Saviour, or that in Him

Digitized by Google

God and man make one Person, and be verily persuaded thereof, so far as for such faith or belief to become a real principle of life and conduct? inasmuch as, by virtue of such persuasion, they submit to His government, believe His doctrine, and practise His precepts, although they frame no abstract idea of the union between the Divine and human nature; nor may be able to clear up the notion of *person* to the contentment of a minute philosopher? To me it seems evident that if none but those who had nicely examined, and could themselves explain, the principle of Individuation in man, or untie the knots and answer the objections which may be raised even about human personal Identity, would require of us to explain the Divine mysteries, we should not be often called upon for a clear and distinct idea of *person* in relation to the Trinity, nor would the difficulties on that head be often objected to our faith.

*Alc.* Methinks, there is no such mystery in *personal identity*.

*Euph.* Pray, in what do you take it to consist?

*Alc.* In consciousness.

*Euph.* Whatever is possible may be supposed?

*Alc.* It may.

*Euph.* We will suppose now (which is possible in the nature of things, and reported to be fact) that a person, through some violent accident or distemper, should fall into such a total oblivion as to lose all consciousness of his past life and former ideas. I ask, is he not still the same person?

*Alc.* He is the same man, but not the same person. Indeed you ought not to suppose that a person loseth its former consciousness; for this is impossible, though a man perhaps may; but then he becomes another person. In the same person, it must be owned, some old ideas may be lost, and some new ones got; but a total change is inconsistent with identity of person.

*Euph.* Let us then suppose that a person hath ideas and is conscious during a certain space of time, which we will divide into three equal parts, whereof the later terms are marked by the letters A, B, C. In the first part of time, the person gets a certain number of ideas, which are retained in A: during the second part of time, he retains one half of

Digitized by Google

his old ideas, and loseth the other half, in place of which he acquires as many new ones: so that in B his ideas are half old and half new. And in the third part, we will suppose him to lose the remainder of the ideas acquired in the first, and to get new ones in their stead, which are retained in C, together with those acquired in the second part of time. Is this a possible fair supposition?

*Alc.* It is.

*Euph.* Upon these premises, I am tempted to think one may demonstrate that personal identity doth not consist in consciousness.

*Alc.* As how?

*Euph.* You shall judge: but thus it seems to me. The persons in A and B are the same, being conscious of common ideas by supposition. The person in B is (for the same reason) one and the same with the person in C. Therefore, the person in A is the same with the person in C, by that undoubted axiom, *Quæ conveniunt uni tertio conveniunt inter se.* But the person in C hath no idea in common with the person in A. Therefore personal identity doth not consist in consciousness. What do you think, Alciphron, is not this a plain inference?

*Alc.* I tell you what I think: you will never assist my faith, by puzzling my knowledge.

9. *Euph.* There is, if I mistake not, a practical faith, or assent, which sheweth itself in the will and actions of a man, although his understanding may not be furnished with those abstract, precise, distinct ideas, which, whatever a philosopher may pretend, are acknowledged to be above the talents of common men; among whom, nevertheless, may be found, even according to your own concession, many instances of such practical faith, in other matters which do not concern religion. What should hinder, therefore, but that doctrines relating to heavenly mysteries might be taught, in this saving sense, to vulgar minds, which you may well think incapable of all teaching and faith, in the sense you suppose?

Which mistaken sense, said Crito, has given occasion to much profane and misapplied raillery. But all this may very justly be retorted on the minute philosophers themselves,

Digitized by Google

who confound Scholasticism with Christianity, and impute to other men those perplexities, chimeras, and inconsistent ideas which are often the workmanship of their own brains, and proceed from their own wrong way of thinking. Who doth not see that such an ideal abstracted faith is never thought of by the bulk of Christians, husbandmen, for instance, artisans, or servants? Or what footsteps are there in the Holy Scripture to make us think that the wiredrawing of abstract ideas was a task enjoined either Jews or Christians? Is there anything in the law or the prophets, the evangelists or apostles, that looks like it? Every one whose understanding is not perverted by science falsely so-called may see the saving faith of Christians is quite of another kind, a vital operative principle, productive of charity and obedience.

*Alc.* What are we to think then of the disputes and decisions of the famous Council of Nice, and so many subsequent Councils? What was the intention of those venerable Fathers—the *homoousians* and the *homoiousians?* Why did they disturb themselves and the world with hard words, and subtle controversies?

*Cri.* Whatever their intention was, it could not be to beget nice abstracted ideas of mysteries in the minds of common Christians, this being evidently impossible. Nor doth it appear that the bulk of Christian men did in those days think it any part of their duty to lay aside the words, shut their eyes, and frame those abstract ideas; any more than men now do of force, time, number, or several other things, about which they nevertheless believe, know, argue, and dispute. To me it seems that, whatever was the source of these controversies, and howsoever they were managed, wherein human infirmity must be supposed to have had its share, the main end was not, on either side, to convey precise positive ideas to the minds of men, by the use of those contested terms, but rather a negative sense, tending to exclude Polytheism on the one hand, and Sabellianism on the other.[1]

*Alc.* But what shall we say of so many learned and ingenious divines, who from time to time have obliged the world with new explications of mysteries, who, having them-

[1] *Vide* Sozomen, lib. ii., cap. 8.



Digitized by Google

selves professedly laboured to acquire accurate ideas, would recommend their discoveries and speculations to others for articles of faith?

*Cri.* To all such innovators in religion I would say with Jerome, "Why after so many centuries do you pretend to teach us what was untaught before? Why explain what neither Peter nor Paul thought necessary to be explained?"[1] And it must be owned that the explication of mysteries in divinity, allowing the attempt as fruitless as the pursuit of the philosopher's stone in chemistry or the perpetual motion in mechanics, is no more than they, chargeable on the profession itself, but only on the wrongheaded professors of it.

10. It seems, that what hath been now said may be applied to other mysteries of our religion. Original sin, for instance. a man may find it impossible to form an idea of in abstract. or of the manner of its transmission; and yet the belief thereof may produce in his mind a salutary sense of his own unworthiness, and the goodness of his Redeemer: from whence may follow good habits, and from them good actions. the genuine effects of faith; which, considered in its true light, is a thing neither repugnant nor incomprehensible, as some men would persuade us, but suited even to vulgar capacities, placed in the will and affections rather than in the understanding, and producing holy lives rather than subtle theories. Faith, I say, is not an indolent perception, but an operative persuasion of mind, which ever worketh some suitable action, disposition, or emotion in those who have it: as it were easy to prove and illustrate by innumerable instances taken from human affairs. And, indeed, while the Christian religion is considered an institution fitted to ordinary minds, rather than to the nicer talent, whether improved or puzzled, of speculative men; and our notions about faith are accordingly taken from the commerce of the world, and practice of mankind, rather than from the peculiar systems of refiners; it will, I think, be no difficult matter to conceive and justify the meaning and use of our belief of mysteries. against the most confident assertions and objections of the minute philosophers, who are easily to be caught in those

[1] Hieronym. "Ad Pammachium et Oceanum, de Erroribus Origenis."

Digitized by Google

very snares which they have spun and spread for others. And that humour of controversy, the mother and nurse of heresies, would doubtless very much abate, if it was considered that things are to be rated, not by colour, shape, or stamp, so truly as by the weight. If the moment of opinions had been by some litigious divines made the measure of their zeal, it might have spared much trouble both to themselves and others. Certainly one that takes his notions of faith, opinion, and assent from common sense, and common use, and has maturely weighed the nature of signs and language, will not be so apt to controvert the wording of a mystery, or to break the peace of the church, for the sake of retaining or rejecting a term.[1]

But, to convince you by a plain instance of the efficacious necessary use of faith without ideas: we will suppose a man of the world, a minute philosopher, prodigal and rapacious, one of large appetites and narrow circumstances, who shall have it in his power at once to seize upon a great fortune by one villainous act, a single breach of trust, which he can commit with impunity and secrecy. Is it not natural to suppose him arguing in this manner? All mankind in their senses pursue their interest. The interests of the present life are either of mind, body, or fortune. If I commit this fact my mind will be easy (having nought to fear here or hereafter); my bodily pleasure will be multiplied; and my fortune enlarged. Suppose now, one of your refined theorists talks to him about the harmony of mind and affections, inward worth, truth of character, in one word, the beauty of virtue; which is the only interest he can propose to turn the scale against all other secular interests and sensual pleasures; would it not, think you, be a vain attempt?[2] I say, in such a juncture what can the most plausible and refined philosophy of your sect offer to dissuade such a man from his purpose, more than assuring him that the abstracted delight of the mind, the enjoyments of an interior moral sense, the τὸ καλὸν, are what

[1] What follows from this point to the end of the section was not contained in the first edition.—ED.

[2] In the second edition this sentence follows: "On the other hand, possess him with a thorough belief or persuasion that he shall forfeit eternal happiness, or incur eternal misery; and this alone may suffice to turn the scale. I say . . ." &c.—ED.

Digitized by Google

constitute his true interest? And what effect can this have on a mind callous to all those things, and at the same time strongly affected with a sense of corporeal pleasures, and the outward interest, ornaments, and conveniences of life? Whereas that very man, do but produce in him a sincere belief of a Future State, although it be a mystery, although it be what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, he shall, nevertheless, by virtue of such belief, be withheld from executing his wicked project: and that for reasons which all men can comprehend though nobody can be the object of them. I will allow the points insisted on by your refined moralists to be as lovely and excellent as you please to a reasonable, reflecting, philosophical mind. But I will venture to say that, as the world goes, few, very few, will be influenced by them. We see, therefore, the necessary use, as well as the powerful effects of faith, even where we have not ideas.

11. *Alc.* It seems, Euphranor, you would persuade me into an opinion, that there is nothing so singularly absurd as we are apt to think in the belief of mysteries; and that a man need not renounce his reason to maintain his religion. But, if this were true, how comes it to pass that, in proportion as men abound in knowledge, they dwindle in faith?

*Euph.* O Alciphron, I have learned from you that there is nothing like going to the bottom of things, and analysing them into their first principles. I shall therefore make an essay of this method, for clearing up the nature of faith with what success, I shall leave you to determine; for I dare not pronounce myself, on my own judgment, whether it be right or wrong: but thus it seems to me. The objections made to faith are by no means an effect of knowledge, but proceed rather from an ignorance of what knowledge is: which ignorance may possibly be found even in those who pass for masters of this or that particular branch of knowledge. Science and faith agree in this, that they both imply an assent of the mind: and, as the nature of the first is most clear and evident, it should be first considered in order to cast a light on the other. To trace things from their original, it seems that the human mind, naturally furnished with the ideas of things particular and concrete, and being designed

Digitized by Google

not for the bare intuition of ideas, but for action and operation about them, and pursuing her own happiness therein, stands in need of certain general rules or theorems to direct her operations in this pursuit; the supplying which want is the true, original, reasonable end of studying the arts and sciences. Now, these rules being general, it follows that they are not to be obtained by the mere consideration of the original ideas, or particular things, but by the means of marks and signs, which, being so far forth universal, become the immediate instruments and materials of science. It is not, therefore, by mere contemplation of particular things, and much less of their abstract general ideas, that the mind makes her progress, but by an apposite choice and skilful management of signs:—for instance, *force* and *number*, taken in concrete, with their adjuncts, subjects, and signs, are what every one knows; and considered in abstract, so as making precise ideas of themselves, they are what nobody can comprehend. That their abstract nature, therefore, is not the foundation of science is plain: and that barely considering their ideas in concrete, is not the method to advance in the respective sciences is what every one that reflects may see; nothing being more evident than that one who can neither write nor read, in common use understands the meaning of numeral words, as well as the best philosopher or mathematician.

12. But here lies the difference: the one who understands the notation of numbers, by means thereof is able to express briefly and distinctly all the variety and degrees of number, and to perform with ease and despatch several arithmetical operations by the help of general rules. Of all which operations as the use in human life is very evident, so it is no less evident that the performing them depends on the aptness of the notation. If we suppose rude mankind without the use of language, it may be presumed they would be ignorant of arithmetic. But the use of names, by the repetition whereof in a certain order they might express endless degrees of number, would be the first step towards that science. The next step would be, to devise proper marks of a permanent nature, and visible to the eye, the kind and order whereof must be chosen with judgment, and accommodated to the names. Which marking or notation would, in proportion as

Digitized by Google

it was apt and regular, facilitate the invention and application of general rules to assist the mind in reasoning and judging, in extending, recording, and communicating its knowledge about numbers: in which theory and operations, the mind is immediately occupied about the signs or notes, by mediation of which it is directed to act about things, or number in concrete (as the logicians call it) without ever considering the simple, abstract, intellectual, general idea of number. The signs, indeed, do in their use imply relations or proportions of things: but these relations are not abstract general ideas, being founded in particular things, and not making of themselves distinct ideas to the mind, exclusive of the particular ideas and the signs.[1] I imagine one need not think much to be convinced that the science of arithmetic, in its rise, operations, rules, and theorems, is altogether conversant about the artificial use of signs, names, and characters. These names and characters are universal, inasmuch as they are signs. The names are referred to things, and the characters to names, and both to operation. The names being few, and proceeding by a certain analogy, the characters will be more useful, the simpler they are, and the more aptly they express this analogy. Hence the old notation by letters was more useful than words written at length. And the modern notation by figures, expressing the progression or analogy of the names by their simple places, is much preferable to that, for ease and expedition, as the invention of algebraical symbols is to this, for extensive and general use. As arithmetic and algebra are sciences of great clearness, certainty, and extent, which are immediately conversant about signs, upon the skilful use and management whereof they entirely depend, so a little attention to them may possibly help us to judge of the progress of the mind in other sciences, which, though differing in nature, design, and object, may yet agree in the general methods of proof and inquiry.

13. If I mistake not, all sciences, so far as they are universal and demonstrable by human reason, will be found conversant about *signs* as their immediate object, though

[1] The passage "The signs, indeed," . . . "ideas and the signs" (five lines) was inserted in the third edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

these in the application are referred to things. The reason whereof is not difficult to conceive. For, as the mind is better acquainted with some sort of objects, which are earlier offered to it, strike it more sensibly, or are more easily comprehended than others, it seems naturally led to substitute those objects for such as are more subtile, fleeting, or difficult to conceive. Nothing, I say, is more natural, than to make the things we know a step towards those we do not know; and to explain and represent things less familiar by others which are more so. Now, it is certain we imagine before we reflect, and we perceive by sense before we imagine, and of all our senses the sight is the most clear, distinct, various, agreeable, and comprehensive. Hence it is natural to assist the intellect by the imagination, the imagination by sense, and the other senses by sight. Hence figures, metaphors, and types. We illustrate spiritual things by corporeal; we substitute sounds for thoughts, and written letters for sounds; emblems, symbols, and hieroglyphics, for things too obscure to strike, and too various or too fleeting to be retained. We substitute things imaginable for things intelligible, sensible things for imaginable, smaller things for those that are too great to be comprehended easily, and greater things for such as are too small to be discerned distinctly, present things for absent, permanent for perishing, and visible for invisible. Hence the use of models and diagrams. Hence right lines are substituted for time, velocity, and other things of very different natures. Hence we speak of spirits in a figurative style, expressing the operations of the mind by allusions and terms borrowed from sensible things, such as *apprehend*, *conceive*, *reflect*, *discourse*, and such-like: and hence those allegories which illustrate things intellectual by visions exhibited to the fancy. Plato, for instance, represents the mind presiding in her vehicle by the driver of a winged chariot, which sometimes moults and droops: and is drawn by two horses, the one good and of a good race, the other of a contrary kind; symbolically expressing the tendency of the mind towards the Divinity, as she soars or is borne aloft by two instincts like wings, the one in the Intellect towards Truth, the other in the Will towards Excellence, which instincts moult or are weakened by sensual inclinations; expressing also her alternate elevations and

Digitized by Google

depressions, the struggles between reason and appetite, like horses that go an unequal pace, or draw different ways, embarrassing the soul in her progress to perfection. I am inclined to think the Doctrine of Signs a point of great importance, and general extent, which, if duly considered, would cast no small light upon Things, and afford a just and genuine solution of many difficulties.

14. Thus much, upon the whole, may be said of all signs:—that they do not always suggest ideas signified to the mind: that when they suggest ideas, they are not general abstract ideas: that they have other uses besides barely standing for and exhibiting ideas, such as raising proper emotions, producing certain dispositions or habits of mind, and directing our actions in pursuit of that happiness, which is the ultimate end and design, the primary spring and motive, that sets rational agents at work: [1] that signs may imply or suggest the relations of things; which relations, habitudes or proportions, as they cannot be by us understood without the help of signs, so being thereby expressed and confuted, they enable us to act with regard to things: that the true end of speech, reason, science, faith, assent, in all its different degrees, is not merely, or principally, or always, the imparting or acquiring of ideas, but rather something of an active operative nature, tending to a conceived good; which may sometimes be obtained, not only although the ideas marked are not offered to the mind, but even although there should be no possibility of offering or exhibiting any such idea to the mind: for instance, the algebraic mark, which denotes the root of a negative square, hath its use in logistic operations, although it be impossible to form an idea of any such quantity. And what is true of algebraic signs is also true of words or language, modern algebra being in fact a more short, apposite, and artificial sort of language, and it being possible to express by words at length, though less conveniently, all the steps of an algebraical process. And it must be confessed that even the mathematical sciences themselves, which above all others are reckoned the most clear and certain, if they are con-

[1] From this point to "that the true end," &c. (five lines), was inserted in the third edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

sidered, not as instruments to direct our practice, but as speculations to employ our curiosity, will be found to fall short in many instances of those clear and distinct ideas, which, it seems, the minute philosophers of this age, whether knowingly or ignorantly, expect and insist upon in the mysteries of religion.

15. Be the science or subject what it will, whensoever men quit particulars for generalities, things concrete for abstractions, when they forsake practical views, and the useful purposes of knowledge for barren speculation, considering means and instruments as ultimate ends, and labouring to attain precise ideas which they suppose indiscriminately annexed to all terms, they will be sure to embarrass themselves with difficulties and disputes. Such are those which have sprung up in geometry about the nature of the angle of contact, the doctrine of proportions, of indivisibles, infinitesimals, and divers other points; notwithstanding all which, that science is very rightly esteemed an excellent and useful one, and is really found to be so in many occasions of human life, wherein it governs and directs the actions of men, so that by the aid or influence thereof those operations become just and accurate which would otherwise be faulty and uncertain. And, from a parity of reason, we should not conclude any other doctrines which govern, influence, or direct the mind of man to be, any more than that, the less true or excellent, because they afford matter of controversy, and useless speculation to curious and licentious wits: particularly those articles of our Christian faith, which, in proportion as they are believed, persuade, and, as they persuade, influence the lives and actions of men. As to the perplexity of contradictions and abstracted notions, in all parts whether of human science or Divine faith, cavillers may equally object, and unwary persons incur, while the judicious avoid it. There is no need to depart from the received rules of reasoning to justify the belief of Christians. And if any pious men think otherwise, it may be supposed an effect, not of religion, or of reason, but only of human weakness. If this age be singularly productive of infidels, I shall not therefore conclude it to be more knowing, but only more presuming, than former ages: and their conceit, I doubt, is

Digitized by Google

not the effect of consideration. To me it seems that the more thoroughly and extensively any man shall consider and scan the principles, objects, and methods of proceeding in arts and sciences, the more he will be convinced there is no weight in those plausible objections that are made against the mysteries of faith; which it will be no difficult matter for him to maintain or justify in the received method of arguing, on the common principles of logic, and by numberless avowed parallel cases, throughout the several branches of human knowledge, in all which the supposition of abstract ideas creates the same difficulties.

*Alc.* According to this doctrine, all points may be alike maintained. There will be nothing absurd in Popery, not even transubstantiation.

*Cri.* Pardon me. This doctrine justifies no article of faith which is not contained in Scripture, or which is repugnant to human reason, which implies a contradiction, or which leads to idolatry or wickedness of any kind—all which is very different from our not having a distinct or an abstract idea of a point.[1]

16. [2]*Alc.* I will allow, Euphranor, this reasoning of yours to have all the force you meant it should have. I freely own there may be mysteries; that we may believe where we do not understand; and that faith may be of use, although its object is not distinctly apprehended. In a word, I grant there may be faith and mysteries in other things, but not in religion: and that for this plain reason, because it is absurd to suppose there should be any such thing as religion; and if there be no religion, it follows there cannot be religious faith or mysteries. Religion, it is evident, implies the worship of a God, which worship supposeth rewards and punishments, which suppose merits and demerits, actions good and evil, and these suppose human liberty a thing impossible: and, consequently, religion, a thing built thereon, must be an unreasonable absurd thing. There can be no rational hopes or fears where there is no guilt, nor any guilt where there is nothing done but what unavoidably follows from the structure

[1] The last two speeches appeared first in the second edition.

[2] Sects. 16-20 are a reply to the "Inquiry concerning Human Liberty" by Collins. See note on page 151.—ED.

Digitized by Google

of the world and the laws of motion. Corporeal objects strike on the organs of sense, whence ensues a vibration in the nerves, which, being communicated to the soul or animal spirit in the brain or root of the nerves, produceth therein that motion called volition: and this produceth a new determination in the spirits, causing them to flow into such nerves as must necessarily by the laws of mechanism produce such certain actions. This being the case, it follows that those things which vulgarly pass for human actions are to be esteemed mechanical, and that they are falsely ascribed to a free principle. There is therefore no foundation for praise or blame, fear or hope, reward or punishment; nor consequently for religion, which, as I observed before, is built upon and supposeth those things.

*Euph.* You imagine, Alciphron, if I rightly understand you, that man is a sort of organ played on by outward objects, which, according to the different shape and texture of the nerves, produce different motions and effects therein.

*Alc.* Man may, indeed, be fitly compared to an organ: but a puppet is the very thing. You must know that certain particles, issuing forth in right lines from all sensible objects, compose so many rays, or filaments, which drive, draw, and actuate every part of the soul and body of man, just as threads or wires do the joints of that little wooden machine vulgarly called a *puppet*: with this only difference, that the latter are gross, and visible to common eyes, whereas the former are too fine and subtle to be discerned by any but a sagacious free-thinker. This admirably accounts for all those operations which we have been taught to ascribe to a thinking principle within us.

*Euph.* This is an ingenious thought, and must be of great use in freeing men from all anxiety about moral notions; as it transfers the principle of action from the human soul to things outward and foreign. But I have my scruples about it. For, you suppose the mind in a literal sense to be moved, and its volitions to be mere motions. Now, if another should affirm, as it is not impossible some or other may, that the soul is incorporeal, and that motion is one thing and volition another, I would fain know how you could make your point clear to such a one. It must be owned very clear to those who admit the soul to be corporeal, and all her acts to be

Digitized by Google

but so many motions. Upon this supposition, indeed, the the light wherein you place human nature is no less true than it is fine and new. But, let any one deny this supposition, which is easily done, and the whole superstructure falls to the ground. If we grant the above-mentioned points, I will not deny a fatal necessity must ensue. But I see no reason for granting them. On the contrary, it seems plain that motion and thought are two things as really and as manifestly distinct as a triangle and a sound. It seems, therefore, that, in order to prove the necessity of human actions, you suppose what wants proof as much as the very point to be proved.

17. *Alc.* But, supposing the mind incorporeal, I shall, nevertheless, be able to prove my point. Not to amuse you with far-fetched arguments, I shall only desire you to look into your own breast and observe how things pass there, when an object offers itself to the mind. First, the understanding considers it: in the next place, the judgment decrees about it, as a thing to be chosen or rejected, to be omitted or done, in this or that manner: and this decree of the judgment doth necessarily determine the will, whose office is merely to execute what is ordained by another faculty: consequently, there is no such thing as freedom of the will. For, that which is necessary cannot be free. In freedom there should be an indifference to either side of the question, a power to act or not to act, without prescription or control: and without this indifference and this power, it is evident the will cannot be free. But it is no less evident that the will is not indifferent in its actions, being absolutely determined and governed by the judgment. Now, whatever moves the judgment, whether the greatest present uneasiness, or the greatest apparent good or whatever else it be, it is all one to the point in hand. The will, being ever concluded and controlled by the judgment, is in all cases alike under necessity. There is, indeed, throughout the whole of human nature, nothing like a principle of freedom, every faculty being determined in all its acts by something foreign to it. The understanding, for instance, cannot alter its idea, but must necessarily see it such as it presents itself. The appetites by a natural necessity are carried towards their respective objects. Reason cannot infer indifferently anything from anything, but is limited by

Digitized by Google

the nature and connexion of things, and the eternal rules of reasoning. And, as this is confessedly the case of all other faculties, so it equally holds with respect to the will itself, as hath been already shewn. And, if we may credit the divine Characterizer of our times, this above all others must be allowed the most slavish faculty. "Appetite (saith that noble writer), which is elder brother to Reason, being the lad of stronger growth, is sure, on every contest, to take the advantage of drawing all to his own side. And Will, so highly boasted, is but at best a football or top between these youngsters, who prove very unfortunately matched; till the youngest, instead of now and then a kick or lash bestowed to little purpose, forsakes the ball or top itself, and begins to lay about his elder brother."[1]

*Cri.* This beautiful parable for style and manner might equal those of a known English writer in low life, renowned for allegory, were it not a little incorrect, making the weaker lad find his account in laying about the stronger.

*Alc.* This is helped up by supposing the stronger lad the greater coward. But, be that as it will, so far as it relates to the point in hand, this is a clear state of the case.

The same point may be also proved from the prescience of God. That which is certainly foreknown will certainly be. And what is certain is necessary. And necessary actions cannot be the effect of free-will. Thus you have this fundamental point of our free-thinking philosophy demonstrated different ways.

*Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, do you think it implies a contradiction that God should make a creature free?

*Alc.* I do not.

*Euph.* It is then possible there may be such a thing?

*Alc.* This I do not deny.

*Euph.* You can therefore conceive and suppose such a free agent?

*Alc.* Admitting that I can; what then?

*Euph.* Would not such a one think that he acted?

*Alc.* He would.

*Euph.* And condemn himself for some actions, and approve himself for others?

[1] "Characteristics," vol. i., p. 187.

Digitized by Google

*Alc.* This too I grant.

*Euph.* Would he not think he deserved reward or punishment?

*Alc.* He would.

*Euph.* And are not all these characters actually found in man?

*Alc.* They are.

*Euph.* Tell me now, what other character of your supposed free agent may not actually be found in man? For, if there is none such, we must conclude that man hath all the marks of a free agent.

*Alc.* Let me see! I was certainly overseen in granting it possible, even for Almighty power, to make such a thing as a free agent. I wonder how I came to make such an absurd concession, after what had been, as I observed before, demonstrated so many different ways.

*Euph.* Certainly whatever is possible may be supposed: and whatever doth not imply a contradiction is possible to an Infinite Power: therefore, if a natural agent implieth no contradiction, such a being may be supposed. Perhaps, from this supposition, I might infer man to be free. But I will not suppose him that free agent; since, it seems, you pretend to have demonstrated the contrary.[1] O Alciphron! it is vulgarly observed that men judge of others by themselves. But, in judging of me by this rule, you may be mistaken. Many things are plain to one of your sagacity, which are not so to me, who am often puzzled rather than enlightened by those very proofs that with you pass for clear and evident. And, indeed, be the inference never so just, yet, so long as the premises are not clear, I cannot be thoroughly convinced. You must give me leave therefore to propose some questions, the solution of which may perhaps show what at present I am not able to discern.

*Alc.* I shall leave what hath been said with you, to consider and ruminate upon. It is now time to set out on our journey: there is, therefore, no room for a long string of question and answer.

18. *Euph.* I shall then only beg leave, in a summary

[1] From the beginning of Euphranor's speech to this point (seven lines) first appeared in the second edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

manner, to make a remark or two on what you have advanced. In the first place, I observe you take that for granted which I cannot grant, when you assert whatever is certain the same to be necessary. To me, certain and necessary seem very different; there being nothing in the former notion that implies constraint, nor consequently which may not consist with a man's being accountable for his actions. If it is foreseen that such an action shall be done, may it not also be foreseen that it shall be an effect of human choice and liberty? In the next place, I observe that you very nicely abstract and distinguish the actions of the mind, judgment, and will: that you make use of such terms as power, faculty, act, determination, indifference, freedom, necessity, and the like, as if they stood for distinct abstract ideas: and that this supposition seems to ensnare the mind into the same perplexities and errors, which, in all other instances, are observed to attend the doctrine of abstraction. It is self-evident that there is such a thing as motion: and yet there have been found philosophers, who, by refined reasoning, would undertake to prove that there was no such thing. Walking before them was thought the proper way to confute those ingenious men. It is no less evident that man is a free agent: and though, by abstracted reasonings, you would puzzle me, and seem to prove the contrary, yet, so long as I am conscious of my own actions, this inward evidence of plain fact will bear me up against all your reasonings, however subtle and refined. The confuting plain points by obscure ones may perhaps convince me of the ability of your philosophers, but never of their tenets. I cannot conceive why the acute Cratylus should suppose a power of acting in the appetite and reason, and none at all in the will? Allowing, I say, the distinction of three such beings in the mind, I do not see how this could be true. But, if I cannot abstract and distinguish so many beings in the soul of man so accurately as you do, I do not find it necessary; since it is evident to me, in the gross and concrete, that I am a free agent. Nor will it avail to say, the will is governed by the judgment, or determined by the object, while, in every sudden common cause, I cannot discern nor abstract the decree of the judgment from the command of the will; while I know the sensible object to be

Digitized by Google

absolutely inert: and lastly, while I am conscious that I am an active being, who can and do determine myself. If I should suppose things spiritual to be corporeal, or refine things actual and real into general abstracted notions, or by metaphysical skill split things simple and individual into manifold parts, I do not know what may follow. But, if I take things as they are, and ask any plain untutored man, whether he acts or is free in this or that particular action, he readily assents, and I as readily believe him from what I find within. And thus, by an induction of particulars, I may conclude man to be a free agent, although I may be puzzled to define or conceive a notion of freedom in general and abstract. And if man be free, he is plainly accountable. But, if you shall define, abstract, suppose, and it shall follow that, according to your definitions, abstractions, and suppositions, there can be no freedom in man, and you shall thence infer that he is not accountable, I shall make bold to depart from your metaphysical Abstracted Sense, and appeal to the Common Sense of mankind.

19. If we consider the notions that obtain in the world of guilt and merit, praise and blame, accountable and unaccountable, we shall find the common question, in order to applaud or censure, acquit or condemn a man, is, whether he *did* such an action? and whether he was *himself* when he did it? which comes to the same thing. It should seem, therefore, that, in the ordinary commerce of mankind, any person is esteemed accountable simply as he is an agent. And, though you should tell me that man is inactive, and that the sensible objects act upon him, yet my own experience assures me of the contrary. I know I act; and what I act I am accountable for. And, if this be true, the foundation of religion and morality remains unshaken. Religion, I say, is concerned no further than that man should be accountable: and this he is according to my sense, and the common sense of the world, if he acts; and that he doth act is self-evident. The grounds, therefore, and ends of religion are secured, whether your philosophic notion of liberty agrees with man's actions or no; and whether his actions are certain or contingent; the question being not, whether he did it with a free will? or what determined his

Digitized by Google

will? not, whether it was certain or foreknown that he would do it? but only, whether he did it wilfully? as what must entitle him to the guilt or merit of it.

*Alc.* But still, the question recurs, whether man be free?

*Euph.* To determine this question, ought we not at first to determine what is meant by the word *free?*

*Alc.* We ought.

*Euph.* In my opinion, a man is said to be free, so far forth as he can do what he will. Is this so, or is it not?

*Alc.* It seems so.

*Euph.* Man, therefore, acting according to his will, is to be accounted free.

*Alc.* This I admit to be true in the vulgar sense. But a philosopher goes higher, and inquires whether man be free to will?

*Euph.* That is, whether he can will as he wills? I know not how philosophical it may be to ask this question, but it seems very idle. The notions of guilt and merit, justice and reward, are in the minds of men antecedent to all metaphysical disquisitions; and, according to those received natural notions, it is not doubted that man is accountable, that he acts, and is self-determined.

20. But a minute philosopher shall, in virtue of wrong suppositions, confound things most evidently distinct; body, for instance, with spirit; motion with volition; certainty with necessity. And an abstractor or refiner shall so analyse the most simple instantaneous act of the mind as to distinguish therein divers faculties and tendencies, principles and operations, causes and effects; and, having abstracted, supposed, and reasoned upon principles, gratuitous and obscure, he will conclude it is no act at all, and man no agent, but a puppet, or an organ played on by outward objects, and his will a top or a football. And this passeth for philosophy and free-thinking. Perhaps this may be what it passeth for, but it by no means seems a natural or just way of thinking. To me it seems that, if we begin from things particular and concrete, and thence proceed to general notions and conclusions, there will be no difficulty in this matter. But, if we begin with generalities, and lay our foundation in abstract ideas, we shall find ourselves en-



Digitized by Google

tangled and lost in a labyrinth of our own making. I need not observe, what every one must see, the ridicule of proving man no agent, and yet pleading for free thought and action, of setting up at once for advocates of liberty and necessity. I have hastily thrown together these hints or remarks, on what you call a fundamental article of the minute philosophy, and your method of proving it, which seems to furnish an admirable specimen of the sophistry of abstract ideas. If, in this summary way, I have been more dogmatical than became me, you must excuse what you occasioned, by declining a joint and leisurely examination of the truth.

*Alc.* I think we have examined matters sufficiently.

*Cri.* To all you have said against human liberty, it is a sufficient answer to observe that your arguments proceed upon an erroneous supposition, either of the soul's being corporeal, or of abstract ideas: not to mention other gross mistakes and gratuitous principles. You might as well suppose that the soul is red or blue as that it is solid. You might as well make the will anything else as motion. And whatever you infer from such premises, which (to speak in the softest manner) are neither proved nor probable, I make no difficulty to reject. You distinguish in all human actions between the last degree of the judgment and the act of the will. You confound certainty with necessity: you inquire, and your inquiry amounts to an absurd question—whether man can will as he wills? As evidently true as is this identical proposition, so evidently false must that way of thinking be which led you to make a question of it. You say the appetites have by necessity of nature a tendency towards their respective objects. This we grant; and withal that appetite, if you please, is not free. But you go further, and tell us that the understanding cannot alter its idea, nor infer indifferently anything from anything. What then? Can we not act at all if we cannot alter the nature of objects, and may we not be free in other things if we are not at liberty to make absurd inferences? You take for granted that the mind is inactive, but that its ideas act upon it: as if the contrary were not evident to every man of common sense, who cannot but know that it is the mind which considers its ideas, chooses, rejects, examines, deliberates, decrees, in a word acts about them, and not they about it.

Digitized by Google

Upon the whole, your premises being obscure and false, the fundamental point, which you pretend to demonstrate so many different ways, proves neither sense nor truth in any.[1] And, on the other hand, there is not need of much inquiry to be convinced of two points, than which none are more evident, more obvious, and more universally admitted by men of all sorts, learned or unlearned, in all times and places, to wit, that man acts, and is accountable for his actions. Whatever abstractors, refiners, or men prejudiced to a false hypothesis may pretend, it is, if I mistake not, evident to every thinking man of common sense, that human minds are so far from being engines or footballs, acted upon and bandied about by corporeal objects, without any inward principle of freedom or action, that the only original true notions that we have of freedom, agent, or action are obtained by reflecting on ourselves, and the operations of our own minds. The singularity and credulity of minute philosophers, who suffer themselves to be abused by the paralogisms of three or four eminent patriarchs of infidelity in the last age, is, I think, not to be matched; there being no instance of bigoted superstition the ringleaders whereof have been able to seduce their followers more openly and more widely from the plain dictates of nature and common sense.

21. *Alc.* It has been always an objection against the discoverers of truth, that they depart from received opinions. The character of singularity is a tax on free-thinking: and as such we most willingly bear it, and glory in it. A genuine philosopher is never modest in a false sense, to the preferring authority before reason, or an old and common opinion before a true one. Which false modesty, as it discourages men from treading in untrodden paths, or striking out new light, is, above all other qualities, the greatest enemy to free-thinking.

[1] The whole preceding part of Crito's speech, varies much in the several editions. The passage "not to mention other gross mistakes . . . nor truth in any" (29 lines), was, with one exception, inserted in the second edition. The exception is the passage "You say the appetites . . . absurd inferences" (ll. 23-31), which is found only in the third edition.—ED.

Digitized by Google

*Cri.* Authority in disputable points will have its weight with a judicious mind, which yet will follow evidence wherever it leads. Without preferring, we may allow it a good second to reason. Your gentlemen, therefore, of the minute philosophy may spare a world of common-place upon reason, and light, and discoveries. We are not attached to authority against reason, nor afraid of untrodden paths that lead to truth, and are ready to follow a new light when we are sure it is no *ignis fatuus*. Reason may oblige a man to believe against his inclinations: but why should a man quit salutary notions for others not less unreasonable than pernicious? Your schemes, and principles, and boasted demonstrations have been at large proposed and examined. You have shifted your notions, successively retreated from one scheme to another, and in the end renounced them all. Your objections have been treated in the same manner, and with the same event. If we except all that relates to the errors and faults of particular persons, and difficulties which, from the nature of things, we are not obliged to explain; it is surprising to see, after such magnificent threats, how little remains that can amount to a pertinent objection against the Christian religion. What you have produced has been tried by the fair test of reason; and though you should hope to prevail by ridicule when you cannot by reason, yet, in the upshot, I apprehend you will find it impracticable to destroy all sense of religion. Make your countrymen ever so vicious, ignorant, and profane, men will still be disposed to look up to a Supreme Being. Religion, right or wrong, will subsist in some shape or other, and some worship there will surely be either of God or the creature. As for your ridicule, can anything be more ridiculous than to see the most unmeaning men of the age set up for free-thinkers, men so strong in assertion, and yet so weak in argument; advocates for freedom introducing a fatality; patriots trampling on the laws of their country; and pretenders to virtue destroying the motives of it? Let any impartial man but cast an eye on the opinions of the minute philosophers, and then say if anything can be more ridiculous than to believe such things and at the same time laugh at credulity.

22. *Lys.* Say what you will, we have the laughers on our

Digitized by Google

side; and as for your reasoning I take it to be another name for sophistry.

*Cri.* And I suppose by the same rule you take your own sophisms for arguments. To speak plainly, I know no sort of sophism that is not employed by minute philosophers against religion. They are guilty of a *petitio principii*, in taking for granted that we believe contradictions; of *non causa pro causa*, in affirming that uncharitable feuds and discords are the effects of Christianity; of *ignoratio elenchi*, in expecting demonstrations where we pretend only to faith. If I were not afraid to offend the delicacy of polite ears, nothing were easier than to assign instances of every kind of sophism, which would shew how skilful your own philosophers are in the practice of that sophistry you impute to others.

*Euph.* For my own part, if sophistry be the art or faculty of deceiving other men, I must acquit these gentlemen of it. They seem to have led me a progress through atheism, libertinism, enthusiasm, fatalism, not to convince me of the truth of any of them, so much as to confirm me in my own way of thinking. They have exposed their fairy ware not to cheat but divert us. As I know them to be professed masters of ridicule, so in a serious sense I know not what to make of them.

*Alc.* You do not know what to make of us! I should be sorry you did. He must be a superficial philosopher that is soon fathomed.

23. *Cri.* The ambiguous character is, it seems, the sure way to fame and esteem in the learned world, as it stands constituted at present. When the ingenious reader is at a loss to determine whether his author be atheist or deist or polytheist, stoic or epicurean, sceptic or dogmatist, infidel or enthusiast, in jest or in earnest, he concludes him without hesitation to be enigmatical and profound. In fact, it is true of the most admired writers of the age, that no man alive can tell what to make of them, or what they would be at.

*Alc.* We have among us moles that dig deep under ground, and eagles that soar out of sight. We can act all parts and become all opinions, putting them on or off with great freedom of wit and humour.

Digitized by Google

*Euph.* It seems then you are a pair of inscrutable, unfathomable, fashionable philosophers.

*Lys.* It cannot be denied.

*Euph.* But, I remember, you set out with an open dogmatical air, and talked of plain principles, and evident reasoning, promised to make things as clear as noonday, to extirpate wrong notions and plant right in their stead. Soon after, you began to recede from your first notions, and adopt others; you advanced one while and retreated another, yielded and retracted, said and unsaid. And after having followed you through so many untrodden paths and intricate mazes I find myself never the nearer.

*Alc.* Did we not tell you the gentlemen of our sect are great proficients in raillery?

*Euph.* But, methinks, it is a vain attempt for a plain man of any settled belief or principles, to engage with such slippery, fugitive, changeable philosophers. It seems as if a man should stand still in the same place, while his adversary chooses and changes his situation, has full range and liberty to traverse the field, and attack him on all sides and in all shapes, from a nearer or further distance, on horseback or on foot, in light or heavy armour, in close fight or with missive weapons.

*Alc.* It must be owned, a gentleman hath great advantage over a strait-laced pedant or bigot.

*Euph.* But, after all, what am I the better for the conversation of two such knowing gentlemen? I hoped to have unlearned my errors, and to have learned truths from you, but, to my great disappointment, I do not find that I am either untaught or taught.

*Alc.* To unteach men their prejudices is a difficult task: and this must first be done, before we can pretend to teach them the truth. Besides, we have at present no time to prove and argue.

*Euph.* But suppose my mind white paper; and, without being at any pains to extirpate my opinions, or prove your own, only say what you would write thereon, or what you would teach me in case I were teachable. Be for once in earnest, and let me know some one conclusion of yours before we part; or I shall entreat Crito to violate the laws of hospitality towards those who have violated the laws of philo-

Digitized by Google

sophy, by hanging out false lights to one benighted in ignorance and error. I appeal to you (said he, turning to Crito), whether these philosophical knight-errants should not be confined in this castle of yours, till they make reparation.

Euphranor has reason, said Crito, and my sentence is, that you remain here in durance till you have done something towards satisfying the engagement I am under — having promised, he should know your opinions from yourselves, which you also agreed to.

24. *Alc.* Since it must be so, I will now reveal what I take to be the sum and substance, the grand arcanum and ultimate conclusion of our sect, and that in two words, ΠΑΝΤΑ ΥΠΟΛΗΨΙΣ.

*Cri.* You are then a downright sceptic. But, sceptic as you are, you own it probable there is a God, certain that the Christian religion is useful, possible it may be true, certain that, if it be, the minute philosophers are in a bad way. This being the case, how can it be questioned what course a wise man should take? Whether the principles of Christians or infidels are truest may be made a question; but which are safest can be none. Certainly if you doubt of all opinions you must doubt of your own; and then, for aught you know, the Christian may be true. The more doubt the more room there is for faith, a sceptic of all men having the least right to demand evidence. But, whatever uncertainty there may be in other points, thus much is certain:—either there is or is not a God: there is or is not a revelation: man either is or is not an agent: the soul is or is not immortal. If the negatives are not sure, the affirmatives are possible. If the negatives are improbable, the affirmatives are probable. In proportion as any of your ingenious men finds himself unable to prove any one of these negatives, he hath grounds to suspect he may be mistaken. A minute philosopher, therefore, that would act a consistent part, should have the diffidence, the modesty, and the timidity, as well as the doubts of a sceptic; not pretend to an ocean of light, and then lead us to an abyss of darkness. If I have any notion of ridicule, this is most ridiculous. But your ridiculing what, for aught you know, may be true, I can make no sense of. It is

Digitized by Google

neither acting as a wise man with regard to your own interest, nor as a good man with regard to that of your country.

25. Tully saith somewhere, *Aut undique religionem tolle, aut usquequaque conserva:* Either let us have no religion at all, or let it be respected. If any single instance can be shewn of a people that ever prospered without some religion, or if there be any religion better than the Christian, propose it in the grand assembly of the nation to change our constitution, and either live without religion, or introduce that new religion. A sceptic, as well as other men, is member of a community, and can distinguish between good and evil, natural or political. Be this then his guide as a patriot, though he be no Christian. Or, if he doth not pretend even to this discernment, let him not pretend to correct or alter what he knows nothing of: neither let him that only doubts behave as if he could demonstrate. Timagoras is wont to say, I find my country in possession of certain tenets; they appear to have a useful tendency, and as such are encouraged by the legislature; they make a main part of our constitution; I do not find these innovators can disprove them, or substitute things more useful and certain in their stead: out of regard therefore to the good of mankind and the laws of my country, I shall acquiesce in them. I do not say Timagoras is a Christian, but I reckon him a patriot. Not to inquire in a point of so great concern is folly, but it is still a higher degree of folly to condemn without inquiring.

Lysicles seemed heartily tired of this conversation. It is now late, said he to Alciphron, and all things are ready for our departure. Every one hath his own way of thinking; and it is as impossible for me to adopt another man's as to make his complexion and features mine.

Alciphron pleaded that, having complied with Euphranor's conditions, they were now at liberty: and Euphranor answered that, all he desired having been to know their tenets, he had nothing further to pretend.

26. The philosophers being gone, I observed to Crito how unaccountable it was that men so easy to confute should be so difficult to convince.

Digitized by Google

This, said Crito, is accounted for by Aristotle, who tells us that arguments have not an effect on all men, but only on them whose minds are prepared by education and custom, as land is for seed.[1] Make a point never so clear, it is great odds that a man whose habits and the bent of whose mind lie in a contrary way shall be unable to comprehend it. So weak a thing is reason in competition with inclination.

I replied, This answer might hold with respect to other persons and other times; but when the question was of inquisitive men, in an age wherein reason was so much cultivated, and thinking so much in vogue, it did not seem satisfactory.

I have known it remarked, said Crito, by a man of much observation, that in the present age thinking is more talked of but less practised than in ancient times; and that since the revival of learning men have read much and wrote much but thought little: insomuch that with us to think closely and justly is the least part of a learned man, and none at all of a polite man. The free-thinkers, it must be owned, make great pretensions to thinking, and yet they shew but little exactness in it. A lively man, and what the world calls a man of sense, are often destitute of this talent; which is not a mere gift of nature, but must be improved and perfected by much attention and exercise on very different subjects; a thing of more pains and time than the hasty men of parts in our age care to take. Such were the sentiments of a judicious friend of mine. And if you are not already sufficiently convinced of these truths, you need only cast an eye on the dark and confused, but nevertheless admired, writers of this famous sect; and then you will be able to judge whether those who are led by men of such wrong heads can have very good ones of their own. Such, for instance, was Spinosa, the great leader of our modern infidels, in whom are to be found many schemes and notions much admired and followed of late years:—such as undermining religion under the pretence of vindicating and explaining it: the maintaining it not necessary to believe in Christ according to the flesh: the persuading men that miracles are to be understood only in a spiritual and allegorical sense: that vice is not so bad a thing as we

[1] "Ethic. ad Nicom.," lib. x., cap. 9.

Digitized by Google

are apt to think: that men are mere machines impelled by fatal necessity.

I have heard, said I, Spinosa represented as a man of close argument and demonstration.

He did, replied Crito, demonstrate; but it was after such a manner as any one may demonstrate anything. Allow a man the privilege to make his own definitions of common words, and it will be no hard matter for him to infer conclusions which in one sense shall be true and in another false, at once seeming paradoxes and manifest truisms. For example, let but Spinosa define natural right to be natural power, and he will easily demonstrate that "whatever a man can do" he hath a right to do.[1] Nothing can be plainer than the folly of this proceeding: but our pretenders to the *lumen siccum* are so passionately prejudiced against religion, as to swallow the grossest nonsense and sophistry of weak and wicked writers for demonstration.

27. And so great a noise do these men make, with their thinking, reasoning, and demonstrating, as to prejudice some well-meaning persons against all use and improvement of reason. Honest Demea, having seen a neighbour of his ruined by the vices of a free-thinking son, contracted such a prejudice against thinking that he would not suffer his own to read Euclid, being told it might teach him to think; till a friend convinced him the epidemical distemper was not thinking, but only the want and affectation of it. I know an eminent free-thinker who never goes to bed without a gallon of wine in his belly, and is sure to replenish before the fumes are off his brain, by which means he has not had one sober thought these seven years; another, that would not for the world lose the privilege and reputation of free-thinking, who games all night, and lies in bed all day: and as for the outside or appearance of thought in that meagre minute philosopher Ibycus, it is an effect, not of thinking, but of carking, cheating, and writing in an office. Strange, said he, that such men should set up for free-thinkers! But it is yet more strange that other men should be out of conceit with thinking and reasoning, for the sake of such pretenders.

[1] "Tractat. Polit.," cap. 2.

Digitized by Google

I answered, that some good men conceived an opposition between reason and religion, faith and knowledge, nature and grace; and that, consequently, the way to promote religion was to quench the light of nature and discourage all rational inquiry.

28. How right the intentions of these men may be, replied Crito, I shall not say; but surely their notions are very wrong. Can anything be more dishonourable to religion than the representing it as an unreasonable, unnatural, ignorant institution? God is the Father of all lights, whether natural or revealed. Natural concupiscence is one thing, and the light of nature another. You cannot therefore argue from the former against the latter: neither can you from science, falsely so called, against real knowledge. Whatever, therefore, is said of the one in Holy Scripture is not to be interpreted of the other.

I insisted that human learning in the hands of divines had, from time to time, created great disputes and divisions in the church.

As abstracted metaphysics, replied Crito, have always a tendency to produce disputes among Christians, as well as other men, so it should seem that genuine truth and knowledge would allay this humour, which makes men sacrifice the undisputed duties of peace and charity to disputable notions.

After all, said I, whatever may be said for reason, it is plain the sceptics and infidels of the age are not to be cured by it.

I will not dispute this point, said Crito: in order to cure a distemper, you should consider what produced it. Had men reasoned themselves into a wrong opinion, one might hope to reason them out of it. But this is not the case; the infidelity of most minute philosophers seeming an effect of very different motives from thought and reason. Little incidents, vanity, disgust, humour, inclination, without the least assistance from reason, are often known to make infidels. Where the general tendency of a doctrine is disagreeable, the mind is prepared to relish and improve everything that with the least pretence seems to make against it. Hence the coarse manners of a country curate, the polite

Digitized by Google

manners of a chaplain, the wit of a minute philosopher, a jest, a song, a tale can serve instead of a reason for infidelity. Bupalus preferred a rake in the church, and then made use of him as an argument against it. Vice, indolence, faction, and fashion produce minute philosophers, and mere petulancy not a few. Who then can expect a thing so irrational and capricious should yield to reason? [1]It may, nevertheless, be worth while to argue against such men, and expose their fallacies, if not for their own sake, yet for the sake of others; as it may lessen their credit, and prevent the growth of their sect, by removing a prejudice in their favour, which sometimes inclines others as well as themselves to think they have made a monopoly of human reason.

29. The most general pretext which looks like reason is taken from the variety of opinions about religion. This is a resting-stone to a lazy and superficial mind. But one of more spirit and a juster way of thinking makes it a step whence he looks about, and proceeds to examine, and compare the differing institutions of religion. He will observe which of these is the most sublime and rational in its doctrines, most venerable in its mysteries, most useful in its precepts, most decent in its worship? which createth the noblest hopes, and most worthy views? He will consider their rise and progress: which oweth least to human arts or arms? which flatters the senses and gross inclinations of men? which adorns and improves the most excellent part of our nature? which hath been propagated in the most wonderful manner? which hath surmounted the greatest difficulties, or shewed the most disinterested zeal and sincerity in its professors? He will inquire, which best accords with nature and history? He will consider, what savours of the world, and what looks like wisdom from above? He will be careful to separate human alloy from that which is Divine; and, upon the whole, form his judgment like a reasonable freethinker. But, instead of taking such a rational course, one of these hasty sceptics shall conclude without demurring there is no wisdom in politics, no honesty in dealings, no knowledge in philosophy, no truth in religion; and all by

[1] These concluding lines of sect. 28 may be accepted as Berkeley's own description of the scope of this work.—ED.

Digitized by Google

one and the same sort of inference, from the numerous examples of folly, knavery, ignorance, and error which are to be met with in the world. But, as those who are unknowing in everything else imagine themselves sharpsighted in religion, this learned sophism is oftenest levelled against Christianity.

30. In my opinion, he that would convince an infidel who can be brought to reason ought in the first place clearly to convince him of the being of a God; it seeming to me, that any man who is really a Theist, cannot be an enemy to the Christian religion; and that the ignorance or disbelief of this fundamental point is that which at bottom constitutes the minute philosopher. I imagine they who are acquainted with the great authors in the minute philosophy need not be told of this. The being of a God is capable of clear proof, and a proper object of human reason: whereas the mysteries of His nature, and indeed whatever there is of mystery in religion, to endeavour to explain and prove by reason is a vain attempt. It is sufficient if we can shew there is nothing absurd or repugnant in our belief of those points, and, instead of framing hypotheses to explain them, we use our reason only for answering the objections brought against them. But, on all occasions, we ought to distinguish the serious, modest, ingenuous man of sense, who hath scruples about religion, and behaves like a prudent man in doubt, from the minute philosophers, those profane and conceited men, who must needs proselyte others to their own doubts. When one of this stamp presents himself, we should consider what species he is of: whether a first or a second-hand philosopher, a libertine, scorner, or sceptic? Each character requiring a peculiar treatment. Some men are too ignorant to be humble, without which there can be no docility. But though a man must in some degree have thought, and considered, to be capable of being convinced, yet it is possible the most ignorant may be laughed out of his opinions. I knew a woman of sense reduce two minute philosophers, who had long been a nuisance to the neighbourhood, by taking her cue from their predominant affectations. The one set up for being the most incredulous man upon earth, the other for the most unbounded freedom. She observed to the

Digitized by Google

first, that he who had credulity sufficient to trust the most valuable things, his life and fortune, to his apothecary and lawyer, ridiculously affected the character of incredulous by refusing to trust his soul, a thing in his own account but a mere trifle, to his parish priest. The other, being what you call a beau, she made sensible how absolute a slave he was in point of dress, to him the most important thing in the world, while he was earnestly contending for a liberty of thinking, with which he never troubled his head; and how much more it concerned and became him to assert an independency on fashion, and obtain scope for his genius where it was best qualified to exert itself. The minute philosophers at first hand are very few, and, considered in themselves, of small consequence: but their followers, who pin their faith upon them, are numerous, and not less confident than credulous; there being something in the air and manner of these second-hand philosophers very apt to disconcert a man of gravity and argument, and much more difficult to be borne than the weight of their objections.

31. Crito having made an end, Euphranor declared it to be his opinion, that it would much conduce to the public benefit, if, instead of discouraging free-thinking, there was erected in the midst of this free country a Dianoetic Academy, or seminary for free-thinkers, provided with retired chambers, and galleries, and shady walks and groves, where, after seven years spent in silence and meditation, a man might commence a genuine free-thinker, and from that time forward have licence to think what he pleased, and a badge to distinguish him from counterfeits.

In good earnest, said Crito, I imagine that thinking is the great *desideratum* of the present age; and that the real cause of whatever is amiss may justly be reckoned the general neglect of education in those who need it most—the people of fashion. What can be expected where those who have the most influence have the least sense, and those who are sure to be followed set the worst example? where youth so uneducated are yet so forward? where modesty is esteemed pusillanimity, and a deference to years, knowledge, religion, laws, want of sense and spirit? Such untimely growth of genius would not have been valued or encouraged by the

Digitized by Google

wise men of antiquity; whose sentiments on this point are so ill suited to the genius of our times that it is to be feared modern ears could not bear them. But, however ridiculous such maxims might seem to our British youth, who are so capable and so forward to try experiments, and mend the constitution of their country, I believe it will be admitted by men of sense that, if the governing part of mankind would in these days, for experiment's sake, consider themselves in that old Homerical light as pastors of the people, whose duty it was to improve their flock, they would soon find that this is to be done by an education very different from the modern, and otherguess maxims than those of the minute philosophy. If our youth were really inured to thought and reflexion, and an acquaintance with the excellent writers of antiquity, we should soon see that licentious humour, vulgarly called *free-thinking*, banished from the presence of gentlemen, together with ignorance and ill taste; which as they are inseparable from vice, so men follow vice for the sake of pleasure, and fly from virtue through an abhorrence of pain. Their minds, therefore, betimes should be formed and accustomed to receive pleasure and pain from proper objects, or, which is the same thing, to have their inclinations and aversions rightly placed. Καλῶς χαίρειν ἢ μισεῖν. This, according to Plato and Aristotle, was the ὀρθὴ παιδεία, the right education.[1] And those who, in their own minds, their health, or their fortunes, feel the cursed effects of a wrong one, would do well to consider, they cannot make better amends for what was amiss in themselves than by preventing the same in their posterity.

While Crito was saying this, company came in, which put an end to our conversation.

[1] Plato in "Protag.," and Arist. "Ethic. ad Nicom.," lib. ii., cap. 2, and lib. x., cap. 9.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

# THEORY OF VISION

## VINDICATED AND EXPLAINED.

1733.



Digitized by Google

[It has been seen that the early "Essay towards a New Theory of Vision" was appended to the first and second editions of "Alciphron" (1732), as a further elucidation of Dialogue IV. In the "Daily Postboy," of September 9th, 1732, appeared an anonymous letter, containing eight objections to the annexed "Essay." The present tract is a reply to the Letter. It was published in 1733, with the begetting "Letter" as an appendix. Strangely enough, the "Vindication" was omitted from all collected editions previous to 1871, and was not even published at all till 1860, when Mr. Cowell issued it with very complete annotations. The pamphlet must therefore be regarded as an appendix both to "Alciphron" and the "Essay"; and allusions and references to both are frequent. After replying to the eight objections of the anonymous critic, Berkeley proceeds to defend his "Theory of Vision and Visual Language." This he does, not constructively as in the earlier work, but by assuming it as a hypothesis, and then applying it to the satisfactory solution of all the phenomena of vision. Like the "Essay" it is an appeal to actual consciousness—is psychological therefore, not physiological; and like the "Essay," its final purpose is to restore belief in the immediate and perpetual presence of God.]

Digitized by Google

THE

# THEORY

OF

# VISION,

OR

## VISUAL LANGUAGE,

SHEWING

The Immediate PRESENCE and PROVIDENCE of a DEITY,

VINDICATED *and* EXPLAINED.

---

By the AUTHOR of
ALCIPHRON, *or*, *The* MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.

---

Acts xvii. 28.
*In him we live, and move, and have our being.*

---

*LONDON:*
Printed for J. TONSON in the *Strand.*
MDCCXXXIII.
[Price *One Shilling.*]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

# THEORY OF VISION

## VINDICATED AND EXPLAINED:

### In answer to an Anonymous Writer.

I.

AN ill state of health, which permits me to apply myself but seldom and by short intervals to any kind of studies, must be my apology, Sir, for not answering your Letter[1] sooner. This would have altogether excused me from a controversy upon points either personal or purely speculative, or from entering the lists with declaimers, whom I leave to the triumph of their own passions. And indeed to one of this character, who contradicts himself and misrepresents me, what answer can be made more than to desire his readers not to take his word for what I say, but to use their own eyes, read, examine, and judge for themselves? And to their Common Sense I appeal. For such a writer, such an answer may suffice. But argument, I allow, hath a right to be considered, and, where it doth not convince, to be opposed with reason. And being persuaded that the "Theory of Vision," annexed to "The Minute Philosopher," affords to thinking men a new and unanswerable proof of the Existence and immediate Operation of God, and the constant condescending care of His Providence, I think myself concerned, as well as I am able, to defend and explain it, at a time wherein Atheism hath made a greater progress than some are willing to own, or others to believe.

[1] Published in the "Daily Postboy" of September the 9th, 1732; which see in the Appendix.

Digitized by Google

2. He who considers that the present avowed enemies of Christianity began their attacks against it under the specious pretext of defending the Christian Church and its rights, when he observes the same men pleading for Natural Religion, will be tempted to suspect their views, and judge of their sincerity in one case from what they have shewed in the other. Certainly the notion of a watchful, active, intelligent, free Spirit, with whom we have to do, and in whom we live and move and have our being, is not the most prevailing in the books and conversation even of those who are called Deists. Besides, as their schemes take effect, we may plainly perceive moral virtue and the religion of nature to decay, and see, both from reason and experience, that the destroying the Revealed Religion must end in Atheism or Idolatry. It must be owned, many minute philosophers would not like at present to be accounted Atheists. But how many, twenty years ago, would have been affronted to be thought Infidels, who would now be much more affronted to be thought Christians! As it would be unjust to charge those with Atheism who are not really tainted with it; so it will be allowed very uncharitable and imprudent to overlook it in those who are, and suffer such men, under specious pretexts, to spread their principles, and in the event to play the same game with Natural Religion that they have done with Revealed.

3. It must, without question, shock some innocent admirers of a certain plausible pretender to Deism and Natural Religion,[1] if a man should say, there are strong signatures of Atheism and irreligion in every sense, natural as well as revealed, to be found even in that admired writer: and yet, to introduce taste instead of duty, to make man a necessary agent, to deride a future judgment, seem to all intents and purposes atheistical, or subversive of all religion whatsoever. And these every attentive reader may plainly discover to be his principles; although it be not always easy to fix a determinate sense on such a loose and incoherent writer. There seems to be a certain way of writing, whether good or bad, tinsel or sterling, sense or nonsense, which, being suited to that size of understanding that qualifies its owners for the Minute Philosophy, doth marvellously strike

[1] *I.e.*, Shaftesbury, the "Cratylus" of "Alciphron."—ED.

Digitized by Google

and dazzle those ingenious men, who are by this means conducted they know not how, and they know not whither. Doubtless that Atheist who gilds, and insinuates, and, even while he insinuates, disclaims his principles, is the likeliest to spread them. What availeth it, in the cause of Virtue and Natural Religion, to acknowledge the strongest traces of wisdom and power throughout the structure of the universe, if this wisdom is not employed to observe, nor this power to recompense our actions; if we neither believe ourselves accountable, nor God our Judge?

4. All that is said of a vital principle of order, harmony, and proportion; all that is said of the natural decorum and fitness of things; all that is said of taste and enthusiasm, may well consist and be supposed, without a grain even of Natural Religion, without any notion of Law or Duty, any belief of a Lord or Judge, or any religious sense of a God; the contemplation of the mind upon the ideas of beauty, and virtue, and order, and fitness, being one thing, and a sense of religion another. So long as we admit no principle of good actions but natural affection, no reward but natural consequences; so long as we apprehend no judgment, harbour no fears, and cherish no hopes of a future state, but laugh at all these things, with the author of the "Characteristics," and those whom he esteems the liberal and polished part of mankind,[1] how can we be said to be religious in any sense? Or what is here that an Atheist may not find his account in as well as a Theist? To what moral purpose might not Fate or Nature serve as well as a Deity, on such a scheme? And is not this, at bottom, the amount of all those fair pretences?

5. Certainly that atheistical men, who hold no principles of any religion, natural or revealed, are an increasing number, and this too among people of no despicable rank, hath long since been expressly acknowledged[2] by one who will be allowed a proper judge, even this same plausible pretender himself to Deism and Enthusiasm. But if any well-meaning persons, deluded by artful writers in the Minute Philosophy, or wanting the opportunity of any unreserved conversation with some ingenious men of that sect, should think that

[1] "Characteristics," vol. iii., Miscel. 3, ch. 2.
[2] "Moralists," part ii., sect. 3.

Digitized by Google

*Lysicles* hath overshot the mark, and misrepresented their principles; to be satisfied of the contrary, they need only cast an eye on the "Philosophical Dissertation upon Death,"[1] lately published by a minute philosopher. Perhaps some man of leisure may think it worth while to trace the progress and unfolding of their principles, down from the writer in defence of the "Rights of the Christian Church,"[2] to this plain dealer, the admirable author upon "Death." During which period of time, I think one may observe a laid design gradually to undermine the belief of the Divine Attributes and Natural Religion; which scheme runs parallel with their gradual, covert, insincere proceedings, in respect of the Gospel.

6. That atheistical principles have taken deeper root, and are farther spread than most people are apt to imagine, will be plain to whoever considers that Pantheism, Materialism, Fatalism are nothing but Atheism a little disguised; that the notions of *Hobbes*, *Spinoza*, *Leibnitz*, and *Bayle* are relished and applauded; that as they who deny the Freedom and Immortality of the soul in effect deny its being, even so they do, as to all moral effects and natural religion, deny the being of God, who deny Him to be an observer, judge, and rewarder of human actions; that the course of arguing pursued by infidels leads to Atheism as well as Infidelity.

[An instance of this may be seen in the proceeding of the author of a book intituled, "A Discourse of Free-thinking occasioned by the Rise and Growth of a Sect called Free-thinkers;"[3] who, having insinuated his infidelity from men's various pretences and opinions concerning revealed religion, in like manner appears to insinuate his Atheism from the differing notions of men concerning the nature and attributes of God, particularly from the opinion of our knowing God by Analogy (see p. 42 of the mentioned book), as it hath been misunderstood and misinterpreted by some of late years.[4] Such is the ill effect of untoward defences and explanations

[1] By a "Friend to Truth" (Alberto Radicati, Count di Passerano). Published in 1732.—ED.

[2] By Matthew Tindal. Published in 1706. See the introductions to "Alciphron."—ED.

[3] By Anthony Collins. Published in 1713. See the Essays from the "Guardian" reprinted in this volume.—ED.

[4] See "Alciphron," introductory note to Dialogue IV.—ED.

Digitized by Google

of our faith; and such advantage do incautious friends give its enemies. If there be any modern well-meaning writer, who (perhaps from not having considered the Fifth Book of Euclid) writes much of Analogy without understanding it, and thereby hath slipped his foot into this snare, I wish him to slip it back again, and, instead of causing scandal to good men and triumph to Atheists, discreetly explain away his first sense, and return to speak of God and His attributes in the style of other Christians; allowing that knowledge and wisdom do, in the proper sense of the words, belong to God, and that we have some notion, though infinitely inadequate, of these Divine attributes, yet still more than a man blind from his birth can have of sight and colours.]

But to return, if I see it in their writings, if they own it in their conversation, if their ideas imply it, if their ends are not answered but by supposing it, if their leading author hath pretended to demonstrate Atheism,[1] but thought fit to conceal his Demonstration from the public; if this was known in their clubs, and yet that author was nevertheless followed, and represented to the world as a believer of Natural Religion; if these things are so (and I know them to be so), surely what the favourers of their schemes would palliate, it is the duty of others to display and refute.

7. And although the characters of Divinity are large and legible throughout the whole creation to men of plain sense and common understanding, yet it must be considered that we have other adversaries to oppose, other proselytes to make, men prejudiced to false systems and proof against vulgar arguments, who must be dealt with on a different foot. Conceited, metaphysical, disputing men must be paid in another coin; we must shew that truth and reason in all shapes are equally against them, except we resolve to give them up, what they are very fond of being thought to engross, all pretensions to philosophy, science, and speculation.

8. Meanwhile thus much is evident: those good men who shall not care to employ their thoughts on this "Theory of Vision" have no reason to find fault. They are just where they were, being left in full possession of all other arguments for a God, none of which are weakened by this. And as for

[1] See p. 151, note 1.—ED.

Digitized by Google

those who shall be at the pains to examine and consider this subject, it is hoped they may be pleased to find, in an age wherein so many schemes of Atheism are restored or invented, a new argument of a singular nature in proof of the immediate Care and Providence of a God, present to our minds, and directing our actions. As these considerations convince me that I cannot employ myself more usefully than in contributing to awaken and possess men with a thorough sense of the Deity inspecting, concerning, and interesting itself in human actions and affairs: so, I hope it will not be disagreeable to you that, in order to this, I make my appeal to Reason, from your remarks upon what I have wrote concerning Vision; since men who differ in the means may yet agree in the end, and in the same candour and love of truth.

9. By a sensible *object* I understand that which is properly perceived by sense. Things properly perceived by sense are immediately perceived. Besides things properly and immediately perceived by any sense, there may be also other things suggested to the mind by means of those proper and immediate objects; which things so suggested are not objects of that sense, being in truth only objects of the imagination, and originally belonging to some other sense or faculty. Thus, sounds are the proper object of hearing, being properly and immediately perceived by that, and by no other sense. But, by the mediation of sounds or words, all other things may be suggested to the mind; and yet things so suggested are not thought the object of hearing.

10. The peculiar objects of each sense, although they are truly or strictly perceived by that sense alone, may yet be suggested to the imagination by some other sense. The objects therefore of all the senses may become objects of imagination, which faculty represents all sensible things. A colour, therefore, which is truly perceived by sight alone, may, nevertheless, upon hearing the words blue or red, be apprehended by the imagination. It is in a primary and peculiar manner the object of sight; in a secondary manner it is the object of imagination: but cannot properly be supposed the object of hearing.

11. The objects of sense, being things immediately perceived, are otherwise called *ideas*. The *cause* of these ideas,

Digitized by Google

or the power of producing them, is not the object of sense, not being itself perceived, but only inferred by reason from its effects, to wit, those objects or ideas which are perceived by sense. From our ideas of sense the inference of reason is good to Power, Cause, Agent. But we may not therefore infer that our ideas are like unto this Power, Cause, or Active Being. On the contrary, it seems evident that an idea can be only like another idea, and that in our ideas or immediate objects of sense, there is nothing of Power, Causality, or Agency included.

12. Hence it follows that the Power or Cause of ideas is not an object of sense, but of reason. Our knowledge of the cause is measured by the effect; of the power, by our idea. To the absolute nature, therefore, of outward causes or powers, we have nothing to say: they are no objects of our sense or perception. Whenever, therefore, the appellation of sensible *object* is used in a determined intelligible sense, it is not applied to signify the absolutely existing outward cause or power, but the ideas themselves produced thereby.

13. Ideas which are observed to be connected together are vulgarly considered under the relation of cause and effect, whereas, in strict and philosophic truth, they are only related as the sign to the thing signified. For, we know our ideas, and therefore know that one idea cannot be the cause of another. We know that our ideas of sense are not the cause of themselves. We know also that *we* do not cause them. Hence we know they must have some other efficient cause, distinct from them and us.

14. In treating of Vision, it was my purpose to consider the effects and appearances, the objects perceived by my senses, the ideas of sight as connected with those of touch; to inquire how one idea comes to suggest another belonging to a different sense, how things visible suggest things tangible, how present things suggest things more remote and future, whether by likeness, by necessary connexion, by geometrical inference, or by arbitrary institution.

15. It hath indeed been a prevailing opinion and undoubted principle among mathematicians and philosophers that there were certain ideas common to both senses: whence arose the distinction of primary and secondary qualities.

Digitized by Google

But, I think it hath been demonstrated that there is no such thing as a common object, as an idea, or kind of idea perceived both by sight and touch.[1]

16. In order to treat with due exactness on the nature of Vision, it is necessary in the first place accurately to consider our own ideas; to distinguish where there is a difference; to call things by their right names; to define terms, and not confound ourselves and others by their ambiguous use; the want or neglect whereof hath so often produced mistake. Hence it is that men talk as if one idea was the efficient cause of another; hence they mistake inferences of reason for perceptions of sense; hence they confound the power residing in somewhat external with the proper object of sense, which is in truth no more than our own idea.

17. When we have well understood and considered the nature of Vision, we may, by reasoning from thence, be better able to collect some knowledge of the external, unseen Cause of our ideas; whether it be one or many, intelligent or unintelligent, active or inert, body or spirit. But, in order to understand and comprehend this Theory, and discover the true principles thereof, we should consider the likeliest way is not to attend to unknown substances, external causes, agents, or powers, nor to reason or infer anything about or from things obscure, unperceived, and altogether unknown.

18. As in this inquiry we are concerned with what objects we perceive, or our own ideas, so, upon them our reasonings must proceed. To treat of things utterly unknown as if we knew them, and so lay our beginning in obscurity, would not surely seem the properest means for the discovering of truth. Hence it follows, that it would be wrong if one about to treat of the nature of Vision, should, instead of attending to visible ideas, define the object of sight to be that obscure cause, that invisible power or agent, which produced visible ideas in our minds. Certainly such cause or power does not seem to be the *object* either of the sense or the science of Vision, inasmuch as what we know thereby we know only of the effects. Having premised thus much, I now proceed to consider the principles laid down in your Letter, which I shall take in order as they lie.

[1] "Theory of Vision," sect. 127, &c. (See vol. i. for the text of the "Theory.")

Digitized by Google

19. In your *first paragraph* or *section*, you say that "what ever it is without which is the cause of any idea within, you call the object of sense;" and you tell us soon after this,[1] "that we cannot possibly have an idea of any object without." Hence it follows that by an *object* of sense you mean something that we can have no manner of idea of. This making the objects of sense to be things utterly insensible seems to me contrary to common sense and the use of language. That there is nothing in the reason of things to justify such a definition is, I think, plain from what has been premised.[2] And that it is contrary to received custom and opinion, I appeal to the experience of the first man you meet, who I suppose will tell you that by an object of sense he means that which is perceived by sense, and not a thing utterly unperceivable and unknown. The beings, substances, powers which exist without may indeed concern a treatise on some other science, and may there become a proper subject of inquiry. But, why they should be considered as objects of the visive faculty, in a treatise of Optics, I do not comprehend.

20. The real objects of sight we see, and what we see we know. And these true objects of sense and knowledge, to wit, our own ideas, are to be considered, compared, distinguished, in order to understand the true Theory of Vision. As to the outward cause of these ideas, whether it be one and the same, or various and manifold, whether it be thinking, or unthinking, spirit or body, or whatever else we conceive or determine about it, the visible appearances do not alter their nature, our ideas are still the same. Though I may have an erroneous notion of the cause, or though I may be utterly ignorant of its nature, yet this doth not hinder my making true and certain judgments about my ideas; my knowing which are the same, and which different; wherein they agree, and wherein they disagree; which are connected together, and wherein this connexion consists; whether it be founded in a likeness of nature, in a geometrical necessity, or merely in experience and custom.

21. In your *second section*, you say "that if we had but one sense, we might be apt to conclude there were no objects at

[1] Sect. 4.

[2] *Supra*, sect. 9, 11, 12.

Digitized by Google

all without us; but that, since the same object is the cause of ideas by different senses, thence we infer its existence. Now, in the first place, I observe, that I am at a loss concerning the point which is here assumed, and would fain be informed how we come to know that the same object causeth ideas by different senses. In the next place, I must observe that, if I had only one sense, I should nevertheless infer and conclude there was some cause without me (which you, it seems, define to be an *object*), producing the sensations or ideas perceived by that sense. For, if I am conscious that I do not cause them, and know that they are not the cause of themselves, both which points seem very clear, it plainly follows that there must be some other third cause distinct from me and them.

22. In your *third section*, you acknowledge with me "that the connexion between ideas of different senses ariseth not from experience." Herein we are agreed. In your *fourth section* you say "that a word denoting an external object is the representative of no manner of idea. Neither can we possibly have an idea of what is solely without us." What is here said of an external unknown object hath been already considered.[1]

23. In the *following section* of your Letter, you declare "that our ideas have only an arbitrary connexion with outward objects, that they are nothing like the outward objects, and that a variation in our ideas doth not imply or infer a change in the objects, which may still remain the same." Now, to say nothing about the confused use of the word "object," which hath been more than once already observed, I shall only remark that the points asserted in this section do not seem to consist with some others that follow.

24. For, in the *sixth section*, you say "that in the present situation of things, there is an infallible certain connexion between the idea and the object." But how can we perceive this connexion, since, according to you,[2] we never perceive such object, nor can have any idea of it? or, not perceiving it, how can we know this connexion to be infallibly certain?

25. In the *seventh section*, it is said "that we may, from our infallible experience, argue from our idea of one sense

[1] *Supra*, sect. 19.

[2] "Letter," sect. iv.

Digitized by Google

to that of another." But, I think it is plain that our experience of the connexion between ideas of sight and touch is not infallible; since, if it were, there could be no *deceptio visus*, neither in painting, perspective, dioptrics, nor any other wise.

26. In the *last section*, you affirm "that experience plainly teaches us that a just proportion is observed in the alteration of the ideas of each sense, from the alteration of the object." Now, I cannot possibly reconcile this section with the fifth, or comprehend how experience should shew us that the alteration of the object produceth a proportionable alteration in the ideas of different senses; or how indeed it should shew us anything at all either from or about the alteration of an object utterly unknown, of which we neither have nor can have any manner of idea. What I do not perceive or know, how can I perceive or know to be altered? And, knowing nothing of its alterations, how can I compute anything by them, deduce anything from them, or be said to have any experience about them?

27. From the observations you have premised, rightly understood and considered, you say it follows "that my 'New Theory of Vision' must in great measure fall to the ground; and the laws of Optics will be found to stand upon the old unshaken bottom." But, though I have considered and endeavoured to understand your remarks, yet I do not in the least comprehend how this conclusion can be inferred from them. The reason you assign for such inference is, "because, although our ideas in one sense are entirely different from our ideas in another, yet we may justly argue from one to the other, as they have one common cause without; of which, you say, we cannot possibly have even the faintest idea." Now, my theory nowhere supposeth that we may not justly argue from the ideas of one sense to those of another, by analogy and by experience; on the contrary, this very point is affirmed, proved, or supported throughout.[1]

28. Indeed I do not see how the inferences which we make from visible to tangible ideas include any consideration of one common unknown external cause, or depend thereon, but only on mere custom or habit. The experience

[1] "Theory of Vision," sect. 38 and 78, &c.

Digitized by Google

which I have had that certain ideas of one sense are attended or connected with certain idea of a different sense is, I think, a sufficient reason why the one may suggest the other.

29. In the next place, you affirm "that something without, which is the cause of all the variety of ideas within, in one sense, is the cause also of the variety in another: and, as they have a necessary connexion with it, we very justly demonstrate, from our ideas of feeling of the same object, what will be our ideas of seeing." As to which, give me leave to remark that to inquire whether that *unknown something* be the same in both cases, or different, is a point foreign to Optics; inasmuch as our perceptions by the visive faculty will be the very same, however we determine that point. Perhaps I think that the same Being which causeth our ideas of sight doth cause not only our ideas of touch likewise, but also all our ideas of all the other senses, with all the varieties thereof. But this, I say, is foreign to the purpose.

30. As to what you advance, that our ideas have a necessary connexion with such cause, it seems to me *gratis dictum*: no reason is produced for this assertion; and I cannot assent to it without a reason. The ideas or effects I grant are evidently perceived: but the cause you say is utterly unknown.[1] How therefore can you tell whether such unknown cause acts arbitrarily or necessarily? I see the effects or appearances: and I know that effects must have a cause: but I neither see nor know that their connexion with that cause is necessary. Whatever there may be, I am sure I see no such necessary connexion, nor, consequently, can demonstrate by means thereof from ideas of one sense to those of another.

31. You add that although to talk of seeing by tangible angles and lines be direct nonsense, yet, to demonstrate from angles and lines in feeling to the ideas in seeing that arise from the same common object is very good sense. If by this no more is meant than that men might argue and compute geometrically by lines and angles in Optics, it is so far from carrying in it any opposition to my theory that I have

[1] "Letter," sect. 1 and 4.

Digitized by Google

expressly declared the same thing.[1] This doctrine, as admitted by me, is indeed subject to certain limitations; there being divers cases wherein the writers of Optics thought we judged by lines and angles, or by a sort of natural geometry, with regard to which I think they were mistaken, and I have given my reasons for it. And those reasons, as they are untouched in your letter, retain their force with me.

32. I have now gone through your reflexions, which the conclusion intimates to have been written in haste, and, having considered them with all the attention I am master of, must now leave it to the thinking reader to judge whether they contain anything that should oblige me to depart from what I have advanced in my "Theory of Vision." For my own part, if I were ever so willing, it is not on this occasion in my power to indulge myself in the honest satisfaction it would be frankly to give up a known error; a thing so much more right and reputable to denounce than to defend. On the contrary, it should seem that the Theory will stand secure; since you agree with me that men do not see by lines and angles; since I, on the other hand, agree with you that we may nevertheless compute in Optics by lines and angles, as I have expressly shewed; since all that is said in your Letter about the object, the same object, the alteration of the object, is quite foreign to the theory, which considereth our ideas as the object of sense, and hath nothing to do with that unknown, unperceived, unintelligible thing which you signify by the word *object*.[2] Certainly the laws of Optics will not stand on the old, unshaken bottom, if it be allowed that we do not see by geometry;[3] if it be evident that explications of phenomena given by the received theories in Optics are insufficient and faulty; if other principles are found necessary for explaining the nature of vision; if there be no idea, nor kind of idea, common to both senses,[4] contrary to the old received universal supposition of optic writers.

33. We not only impose on others but often on ourselves, by the unsteady or ambiguous use of terms. One would

[1] "Theory of Vision," sect. 78.
[2] *Supra*, sect. 14.
[3] "Letter," sect. 8.
[4] "Theory of Vision," sect. 127.



Digitized by Google

imagine that an *object* should be perceived. I must own, when that word is employed in a different sense, that I am at a loss for its meaning, and consequently cannot comprehend any arguments or conclusions about it. And I am not sure that, on my own part, some inaccuracy of expression, as well as the peculiar nature of the subject, not always easy either to explain or to conceive, may not have rendered my Treatise concerning Vision difficult to a cursory reader. But, to one of due attention, and who makes my words an occasion of his own thinking, I conceive the whole to be very intelligible: and, when it is rightly understood, I scarce doubt but it will be assented to. One thing at least I can affirm, that, if I am mistaken, I can plead neither haste nor inattention, having taken true pains and much thought about it.

34. And had you, Sir, thought it worth while to have dwelt more particularly on the subject, to have pointed out distinct passages in my Treatise, to have answered any of my objections to the received notions, refuted any of my arguments in behalf of mine, or made a particular application of your own; I might without doubt have profited by your reflexions. But it seems to me we have been considering, either different things, or else the same things in such different views as the one can cast no light on the other. I shall, nevertheless, take this opportunity to make a review of my Theory, in order to render it more easy and clear; and the rather because, as I had applied myself betimes to this subject, it became familiar; and in treating of things familiar to ourselves, we are too apt to think them so to others.

35. It seemed proper, if not unavoidable, to begin in the accustomed style of optic writers, admitting divers things as true, which, in a rigorous sense, are not such, but only received by the vulgar and admitted for such. There hath been, a long and close connexion in our minds between the ideas of sight and touch. Hence they are considered as one thing: which prejudice suiteth well enough with the purpose of life; and language is suited to this prejudice. The work of science and speculation is to unravel our prejudices and mistakes, untwisting the closest connexions, distinguishing

Digitized by Google

things that are different; instead of confused or perplexed, giving us distinct views; gradually correcting our judgment, and reducing it to a philosophical exactness. And, as this work is the work of time, and done by degrees, it is extremely difficult, if at all possible, to escape the snares of popular language, and the being betrayed thereby to say things strictly speaking neither true nor consistent. This makes thought and candour more especially necessary in the reader. For, language being accommodated to the prænotions of men and use of life, it is difficult to express therein the precise truth of things, which is so distant from their use, and so contrary to our prænotions.

36. In the contrivance of Vision, as that of other things, the wisdom of Providence seemeth to have consulted the operation rather than the theory of man; to the former things are admirably fitted, but, by that very means, the latter is often perplexed. For, as useful as these immediate suggestions and constant connexions are to direct our actions; so is our distinguishing between things confounded, and as it were blended together, no less necessary to the speculation and knowledge of truth.

37. The knowledge of these connexions, relations, and differences of things visible and tangible, their nature, force, and significancy hath not been duly considered by former writers in Optics, and seems to have been the great *desideratum* in that science, which for want thereof was confused and imperfect. A Treatise, therefore, of this philosophical kind, for the understanding of Vision, is at least as necessary as the physical consideration of the eye, nerve, coats, humours, refractions, bodily nature, and motion of light, or the geometrical application of lines and angles for *praxis* or theory, in dioptric glasses and mirrors, for computing and reducing to some rule and measure our judgments, so far as they are proportional to the objects of geometry. In these three lights Vision should be considered, in order to a complete Theory of Optics.

38. It is to be noted that, in considering the Theory of Vision, I observed a certain known method, wherein, from false and popular suppositions, men do often arrive at truth. Whereas in the synthetical method of delivering science or truth already found, we proceed in an inverted order, the

Digitized by Google

conclusions in the analysis being assumed as principles in the synthesis. I shall therefore now begin with that conclusion That *Vision is the Language of the Author of Nature*, from thence deducing theorems and solutions of phenomena, and explaining the nature of visible things and the visive faculty.

39. Ideas which are observed to be connected with other ideas come to be considered as signs, by means whereof things not actually perceived by sense are signified or suggested to the imagination; whose objects they are, and which alone perceives them. And, as sounds suggest other things, so characters suggest other sounds; and, in general, all signs suggest the things signified, there being no idea which may not offer to the mind another idea which hath been frequently joined with it. In certain cases a sign may suggest its correlate as an image, in others as an effect, in others as a cause. But, where there is no such relation of similitude or causality, nor any necessary connexion whatsoever, two things, by their mere coexistence, or two ideas, merely by being perceived together, may suggest or signify one the other, their connexion being all the while arbitrary; for it is the connexion only, as such, that causeth this effect.

40. A great number of arbitrary signs, various and apposite, do constitute a Language. If such arbitrary connexion be instituted by men, it is an artificial Language; if by the Author of Nature, it is a Natural Language. Infinitely various are the modifications of light and sound, whence they are each capable of supplying an endless variety of signs, and accordingly, have been each employed to form languages the one by the arbitrary appointment of mankind, the other by that of God Himself.[1] A connexion established by the Author of Nature, in the ordinary course of things, may surely be called natural, as that made by men will be named artificial. And yet this doth not hinder but the one may be as arbitrary as the other. And, in fact, there is no more likeness to exhibit, or necessity to infer, things tangible from the modifications of light, than there is in language to collect the meaning from the sound.[2] But, such as the connexion is of the various tones and articulations of voice with their several meanings, the same is it between the various modes of light

[1] "Minute Philosopher," Dial. iv., sect. 7, 11.
[2] "Theory of Vision," sect. 144 and 147.

Digitized by Google

and their respective correlates, or, in other words, between the ideas of sight and touch.

41. As to light, and its several modes or colours, all thinking men are agreed that they are ideas peculiar only to sight; neither common to the touch, nor of the same kind with any that are perceived by that sense. But herein lies the mistake, that, beside these, there are supposed other ideas common to both senses, being equally perceived by sight and touch, such as Extension, Size, Figure, and Motion. But that there are in reality no such common ideas, and that the objects of sight, marked by these words, are entirely different and heterogeneous from whatever is the object of feeling, marked by the same names, hath been proved in the "Theory,"[1] and seems by you admitted; though I cannot conceive how you should in reason admit this, and at the same time contend for the received theories, which are so much ruined as mine is established by this main part and pillar thereof.

42. To perceive is one thing; to judge is another. So likewise, to be suggested is one thing, and to be inferred another. Things are suggested and perceived by sense. We make judgments and inferences by the understanding. What we immediately and properly perceive by sight is its primary object, light and colours. What is suggested, or perceived by mediation thereof, are tangible ideas, which may be considered as secondary and improper objects of sight. We infer causes from effects, effects from causes, and properties one from another, where the connexion is necessary. But, how comes it to pass that we apprehend by the ideas of sight certain other ideas, which neither resemble them, nor cause them, nor are caused by them, nor have any necessary connexion with them? the solution of this problem, in its full extent, doth comprehend the whole Theory of Vision. This stating of the matter placeth it on a new foot, and in a different light from all preceding theories.

43. To explain how the mind or soul of man simply sees is one thing, and belongs to Philosophy. To consider particles as moving in certain lines, rays of light as refracted or reflected, or crossing, or including angles, is quite another thing, and appertaineth to Geometry. To account for the

[1] "Theory of Vision," sect. 127.

Digitized by Google

sense of vision by the mechanism of the eye is a third thing, which appertaineth to Anatomy and experiments. These two latter speculations are of use in practice, to assist the defects and remedy the distempers of sight, agreeably to the natural laws contained in this mundane system. But the former Theory is that which makes us understand the true nature of Vision, considered as a faculty of the soul. Which Theory, as I have already observed, may be reduced to this simple question, to wit, How comes it to pass that a set of ideas, altogether different from tangible ideas, should nevertheless suggest them to us, there being no necessary connexion between them? To which the proper answer is, That this is done in virtue of an arbitrary connexion, instituted by the Author of Nature.

44. The proper, immediate object of vision is light, in all its modes and variations, various colours in kind, in degree in quantity; some lively, others faint; more of some and less of others; various in their bounds or limits; various in their order and situation. A blind man, when first made to see, might perceive these objects, in which there is an endless variety; but he would neither perceive nor imagine any resemblance or connexion between these visible objects and those perceived by feeling.[1] Lights, shades, and colours would suggest nothing to him about bodies, hard or soft, rough or smooth: nor would their quantities, limits, or order suggest to him geometrical figures, or extension, or situation, which they must do upon the received supposition, that these objects are common to sight and touch.

45. All the various sorts, combinations, quantities, degrees, and dispositions of light and colours, would, upon the first perception thereof, be considered in themselves only as a new set of sensations and ideas. As they are wholly new and unknown, a man born blind would not, at first sight, give them the names of things formerly known and perceived by his touch. But, after some experience, he would perceive their connexion with tangible things, and would, therefore, consider them as signs, and give them (as is usual in other cases) the same names with the things signified.

46. More and less, greater and smaller, extent, proportion,

[1] "Theory of Vision," sect. 41 and 106.

Digitized by Google

interval are all found in Time as in Space; but it will not therefore follow that these are homogeneous quantities. No more will it follow, from the attribution of common names, that visible ideas are homogeneous with those of feeling. It is true that terms denoting tangible extension, figure, location, motion, and the like, are also applied to denote the quantity, relation, and order of the proper visible objects, or ideas of sight. But this proceeds only from experience and analogy. There is a *higher* and *lower* in the notes of music; men speak in a high or a low key. And this, it is plain, is no more than metaphor or analogy. So likewise, to express the order of visible ideas, the words *situation*, *high* and *low*, *up* and *down*, are made use of; and their sense, when so applied, is analogical.

47. But, in the case of Vision we do not rest in a supposed analogy between different and heterogeneous natures. We suppose an identity of nature, or one and the same object common to both senses. And this mistake we are led into; forasmuch as the various motions of the head, upward and downward, to the right and to the left, being attended with a diversity in the visible ideas, it cometh to pass that those motions and situations of the head, which in truth are tangible, do confer their own attributes and appellations on visible ideas wherewith they are connected, and which by that means come to be termed *high* and *low*, *right* and *left*, and to be marked by other names betokening the modes of position;[1] which, antecedently to such experienced connexion, would not have been attributed to them, at least not in the primary and literal sense.

48. From hence we may see how the mind is enabled to discern by sight the Situation of distant objects. Those immediate objects whose mutual respect and order come to be expressed by terms relative to tangible place, being connected with the real objects of touch, what we say and judge of the one, we say and judge of the other, transferring our thought or apprehension from the signs to the things signified; as it is usual, in hearing or reading a discourse, to overlook the sounds or letters, and instantly pass on to the meaning.[2]

[1] "Theory of Vision," sect. 99.
[2] "Minute Philosopher," Dial. iv., sect. 12.

Digitized by Google

49. But there is a great difficulty relating to the situation of objects, as perceived by sight. For, since the pencils of rays issuing from any luminous object do, after their passage through the pupil, and their refraction by the crystalline, delineate inverted pictures in the *retina*, which pictures are supposed the immediate proper objects of sight, how comes it to pass that the objects whereof the pictures are thus inverted do yet seem erect and in their natural situation? For, the objects not being perceived otherwise than by their pictures, it should follow that, as these are inverted, those should seem so too. But this difficulty, which is inexplicable on all the received principles and theories, admits of a most natural solution, if it be considered that the *retina*, crystalline, pupil, rays crossing, refracted, and reunited in distinct images, correspondent and similar to the outward objects, are things altogether of a *tangible* nature.

50. The pictures, so called, being formed by the radious pencils, after their above-mentioned crossing and refraction, are not so truly pictures as images, or figures, or projections, tangible figures projected by tangible rays on a tangible *retina*, which are so far from being the proper objects of sight that they are not at all perceived thereby, being by nature altogether of the tangible kind, and apprehended by the Imagination alone, when we suppose them actually taken in by the eye. These tangible images on the *retina* have some resemblance unto the tangible objects from which the rays go forth; and in respect of those objects I grant they are inverted. But then I deny that they are, or can be, the proper immediate objects of sight. This, indeed, is vulgarly supposed by the writers of Optics: but it is a vulgar error; which being removed, the forementioned difficulty is removed with it, and admits a just and full solution, being shown to arise from a mistake.

51. Pictures, therefore, may be understood in a twofold sense, or as two kinds quite dissimilar and heterogeneous, the one consisting of light, shade, and colours; the other not properly pictures, but images projected on the *retina*. Accordingly, for distinction, I shall call those *pictures* and these *images*. The former are visible, and the peculiar objects of sight. The latter are so far otherwise, that a man blind from his birth may perfectly imagine, understand, and

Digitized by Google

comprehend them. And here it may not be amiss to observe that figures and motions which cannot be actually felt by us, but only imagined, may nevertheless be esteemed tangible ideas; forasmuch as they are of the same kind with the objects of touch, and as the imagination drew them from that sense.

52. Throughout this whole affair the mind is wonderfully apt to be deluded by the sudden suggestions of Fancy, which it confounds with the Perceptions of Sense, and is prone to mistake a close and habitual connexion between the most distinct and different things for an identity of nature.[1] The solution of this knot about inverted images seems the principal point in the whole Optic Theory; the most difficult perhaps to comprehend, but the most deserving of our attention, and, when rightly understood, the surest way to lead the mind into a thorough knowledge of the true nature of Vision.

53. It is to be noted of these inverted images on the *retina* that, although they are in kind altogether different from the proper objects of sight or pictures, they may nevertheless be proportional to them; as indeed the most different and heterogeneous things in nature may, for all that, have analogy, and be proportional each to other. And although those images, when the distance is given, should be simply as the radiating surfaces; and although it be consequently allowed that the pictures are in that case proportional to those radiating surfaces, or the tangible real magnitude of things; yet it will not thence follow that in common sight we perceive or judge of those tangible real magnitudes simply by the visible magnitudes of the pictures; for, therein the distance is not given, tangible objects being placed at various distances; and the diameters of the images, to which images the pictures are proportional, are inversely as those distances, which distances are not immediately perceived by sight.[2] And, admitting they were, it is nevertheless certain that the mind, in apprehending the magnitudes of tangible objects of sight, doth not compute them by means of the inverse proportion of the distances, and the direct proportion of the pictures. That no such inference or reasoning attends the

[1] "Theory of Vision," sect. 144.
[2] "Theory of Vision," sect. 2.

Digitized by Google

common act of seeing, every one's experience may inform him.

54. To know how we perceive or apprehend by sight the real Magnitude of tangible objects, we must consider the immediate visible objects, and their properties or accidents. These immediate objects are the pictures. These pictures are some more lively, others more faint. Some are higher, others are lower in their own order or peculiar location: which, though in truth quite distinct, and altogether different from that of tangible objects, hath nevertheless a relation and connexion with it, and thence comes to be signified by the same terms, *high*, *low*, and so forth. Now, by the greatness of the pictures, their faintness and their situation, we perceive the magnitude of tangible objects—the greater, the fainter, and the upper pictures suggesting the greater tangible magnitude.

55. For the better explication of this point, we may suppose a diaphanous plane erected near the eye, perpendicular to the horizon, and divided into small equal squares. A straight line from the eye to the utmost limit of the horizon, passing through this diaphanous plane, will mark a certain point or height to which the horizontal plane, as projected or represented in the perpendicular plane, would rise. The eye sees all the parts and objects in the horizontal plane through certain corresponding squares of the perpendicular diaphanous plane. Those that occupy most squares have a greater visible extension, which is proportional to the squares. But the tangible magnitudes of objects are not judged proportional thereto. For, those that are seen through the upper squares shall appear vastly bigger than those seen through the lower squares, though occupying the same, or a much greater number of those equal squares in the diaphanous plane.

56. Rays issuing from every point of each part or object in the horizontal plane, through the diaphanous plane to the eye, do to the imagination exhibit an image of the horizontal plane and all its parts, delineated in the diaphanous plane and occupying the squares thereof to a certain height marked out by a right line reaching from the eye to the farthest limit of the horizon. A line drawn through the forementioned height or mark, upon the diaphanous plane, and parallel

Digitized by Google

the horizon, I call the horizontal line. Every square contains an image of some corresponding part of the horizontal plane. And this entire image we may call the horizontal image, and the picture answering to it the horizontal picture. In which representation, the upper images suggest much greater magnitudes than the lower. And these images suggesting the greater magnitudes are also fainter as well as upper. Whence it follows that faintness and situation concur with visible magnitude to suggest tangible magnitude. For the truth of all which I appeal to the experience and attention of the reader who shall add his own reflexion to what I have written.

57. It is true this diaphanous plane, and the images supposed to be projected thereon, are altogether of a tangible nature.[1] But then there are pictures relative to those images and those pictures have an order among themselves, answering to the situation of the images, in respect of which order they are said to be higher and lower.[2] These pictures also are more or less faint; they, and not the images, being in truth the visible objects. Therefore, what hath been said of the images must in strictness be understood of the corresponding pictures, whose faintness, situation, and magnitude, being immediately perceived by sight, do all three concur in suggesting the magnitude of tangible objects, and this only by an experienced connexion.

58. The magnitude of the picture will perhaps be thought by some to have a necessary connexion with that of the tangible object, or (if not confounded with it) to be at least the sole means of suggesting it. But so far is this from being true, that of two visible pictures, equally large, the one, being fainter and upper, shall suggest an hundred times greater tangible magnitude than the other;[3] which is an evident proof that we do not judge of the tangible magnitude merely by the visible, but that our judgment or apprehension is to be rated rather by other things, which yet, not being conceived to have so much resemblance with tangible magnitude, may therefore be overlooked.

59. It is farther to be observed that, beside this magni-

[1] "Theory of Vision," sect. 158.
[2] *Supra*, sect. 46.
[3] "Theory of Vision," sect. 78.

Digitized by Google

tude, situation, and faintness of the pictures, our prænotions concerning the kind, size, shape, and nature of things do concur in suggesting to us their tangible magnitudes. Thus, for instance, a picture equally great, equally faint, and in the very same situation, shall in the shape of a man suggest a lesser magnitude than it would in the shape of a tower.

60. Where the kind, faintness, and situation of the horizontal pictures[1] are given, the suggested tangible magnitude will be as the visible. The distances and magnitudes that we have been accustomed to measure by experience of touch, lying in the horizontal plane, it thence comes to pass that situations of the horizontal pictures suggest the tangible magnitudes, which are not in like manner suggested by vertical pictures. And it is to be noted that, as an object gradually ascends from the horizon towards the zenith, our judgment concerning its tangible magnitude comes by degrees to depend more entirely on its visible magnitude. For the faintness is lessened as the quantity of intercepted air and vapours is diminished. And as the object riseth the eye of the spectator is also raised above the horizon: so that the two concurring circumstances of faintness and horizontal situation, ceasing to influence the suggestion of tangible magnitudes, this same suggestion or judgment doth, in proportion thereto, become the sole effect of the visible magnitude and the prænotions. But, it is evident that if several things (for instance, the faintness, situation, and visible magnitude) concur to enlarge an idea, upon the gradual omission of some of those things, the idea will be gradually lessened. This is the case of the moon,[2] when she ascends above the horizon, and gradually diminisheth her apparent dimension, as her altitude increaseth.

61. It is natural for mathematicians to regard the visual angle and the apparent magnitude as the sole or principal means of our apprehending the tangible magnitude of objects. But, it is plain from what hath been premised, that our apprehension is much more influenced by other things,[3] which have no similitude or necessary connexion therewith.

62. And these same means which suggest the magnitude

[1] *Supra*, sect. 56. [2] "Theory of Vision," sect. 73.
[3] *Supra*, sect. 58.

Digitized by Google

of tangible things, do also suggest their distance,[1] and in the same manner, that is to say, by experience alone, and not by any necessary connexion or geometrical inference. The faintness, therefore, and vividness, the upper and lower situations, together with the visible size of the pictures, and our prænotions concerning the shape and kind of tangible objects, are the true medium by which we apprehend the various degrees of tangible distance. Which follows from what hath been premised, and will indeed be evident to whoever considers that those visual angles, with their arches or subtenses, are neither perceived by sight, nor by experience of any other sense. Whereas it is certain that the pictures, with their magnitudes, situations, and degrees of faintness, are alone the proper objects of sight; so that whatever is perceived by sight must be perceived by means thereof. To which perception the prænotions also, gained by experience of touch, or of sight and touch conjointly, do contribute.

63. And indeed we need only reflect on what we see to be assured that the less the pictures are, the fainter they are, and the higher (provided still they are beneath the horizontal[2] line or its picture), by so much the greater will the distance seem to be. And this upper situation of the picture is in strictness what must be understood when, after a popular manner of speech, the eye is said to *perceive* fields, lakes, and the like, interjacent[3] between it and the distant object, the pictures corresponding to them being only perceived to be lower than that of the object.[4] Now, it is evident that none of these things have in their own nature any *necessary* connexion with the various degrees of distance. It will also appear, upon a little reflexion, that sundry circumstances of shape, colour, and kind, do influence our judgments or apprehensions of distance; all which follows from our prænotions, which are merely the effect of experience.

64. As it is natural for mathematicians to reduce things to the rule and measure of geometry, they are prone to suppose that the apparent magnitude hath a greater share than we

[1] "Theory of Vision," sect. 77.
[2] *Supra*, sect. 56.
[3] "Theory of Vision," sect. 3.
[4] *Supra*, sect. 55.

Digitized by Google

really find, in forming our judgment concerning the distance of things from the eye. And, no doubt, it would be an easy and ready rule to determine the apparent place of an object, if we could say that its distance was inversely as the diameter of its apparent magnitude, and so judge by this alone, exclusive of every other circumstance. But that this would be no true rule is evident, there being certain cases in vision, by refracted or reflected light, wherein the diminution of the apparent magnitude is attended with an apparent diminution of distance.

65. But further to satisfy us that our judgments or apprehensions, either of the greatness or distance of an object, do not depend absolutely on the apparent magnitude, we need only ask the first painter we meet, who, considering Nature rather than Geometry, well knows that several other circumstances contribute thereto: and, since art can only deceive us as it imitates nature, we need but observe pieces of perspective and landscapes to be able to judge of this point.

66. When the object is so near that the interval between the pupils beareth some sensible proportion to it, the sensation which attends the turning or straining of the eyes, in order to unite the two optic axes therein, is to be considered as one means of our perceiving distance.[1] It must be owned, this sensation belongeth properly to the sense of feeling; but, as it waits upon and hath a regular connexion with distinct vision of near distance (the nearer this, the greater that), so it is natural that it should become a sign thereof, and suggest it to the mind.[2] And that it is so in fact follows from that known experiment of hanging up a ring edge-wise to the eyes, and then endeavouring, with one eye shut, by a lateral motion, to insert into it the end of a stick; which is found more difficult to perform than with both eyes open, from the want of this means of judging by the sensation attending the nearer meeting or crossing of the two optic axes.

67. True it is that the mind of man is pleased to observe in nature rules or methods, simple, uniform, general, and reducible to mathematics, as a means of rendering its knowledge at once easy and extensive. But we must not, for the

[1] "Theory of Vision," sect. 16, 17. [2] *Supra*, sect. 39.

Digitized by Google

sake of uniformities or analogies, depart from truth and fact, nor imagine that in all cases the apparent place or distance of an object must be suggested by the same means. And, indeed, it answers the end of vision to suppose that the mind should have certain additional means or helps, for judging more accurately of the distance of those objects which are the nearest, and consequently most concern us.

68. It is also to be observed that when the distance is so small that the breadth of the pupil bears a considerable proportion to it, the object appears confused. And this confusion being constantly observed in poring on such near objects, and increasing as the distance lessens, becomes thereby a means of suggesting the place of an object.[1] For, one idea is qualified to suggest another, merely by being often perceived with it. And, if the one increaseth either directly or inversely as the other, various degrees of the former will suggest various degrees of the latter, by virtue of such habitual connexion, and proportional increase or diminution. And thus the gradual changing confusedness of an object may concur to form our apprehension of near distance, when we look only with one eye. And this alone may explain Dr. Barrow's difficulty, the case as proposed by him regarding only one visible point. And when several points are considered, or the image supposed an extended surface, its increasing confusedness will, in that case, concur with the increasing magnitude to diminish its distance, which will be inversely as both.

68. Our experience in Vision is got by the naked eye. We apprehend or judge from this same experience, when we look through glasses. We may not, nevertheless, in all cases, conclude from the one to the other; because that certain circumstances, either excluded or added, by the help of glasses, may sometimes alter our judgments, particularly as they depend upon prænotions.

70. What I have here written may serve as a commentary on my "Essay towards a New Theory of Vision;" and, I believe, will make it plain to thinking men. In an age wherein we hear so much of thinking and reasoning, it may seem needless to observe, how useful and necessary it is to

[1] "Theory of Vision," sect. 21.
[2] "Theory of Vision," sect. 29.

Digitized by Google

think, in order to obtain just and accurate notions, to distinguish things that are different, to speak consistently, to know even our own meaning. And yet, for want of this, we may see many, even in these days, run into perpetual blunders and paralogisms. No friend, therefore, to truth and knowledge would lay any restraint or discouragement on thinking. There are, it must be owned, certain general maxims, the result of ages, and the collected sense of thinking persons, which serve instead of thinking, for a guide or rule to the multitude, who, not caring to think for themselves, it is fit they should be conducted by the thoughts of others. But those who set up for themselves, those who depart from the public rule, or those who would reduce them to it, if they do not think, what will men think of them? As I pretend not to make any discoveries which another might not as well have made, who should have thought it worth his pains: so I must needs say that without pains and thought no man will ever understand the true nature of Vision, or comprehend what I have wrote concerning it.

71. Before I conclude, it may not be amiss to add the following extract from the "Philosophical Transactions," relating to a person blind from his infancy, and long after made to see:—"When he first saw, he was so far from making any judgment about distances that he thought all objects whatever touched his eyes (as he expressed it) as what he felt did his skin, and thought no objects so agreeable as those which were smooth and regular, though he could form no judgment of their shape, or guess what it was in any object that was pleasing to him. He knew not the shape of anything, nor any one thing from another, however different in shape or magnitude: but upon being told what things were, whose form he before knew from Feeling, he would carefully observe them that he might know them again; but having too many objects to learn at once, he forgot many of them; and (as he said) at first he learned to know, and again forgot, a thousand things in a day. Several weeks after he was couched, being deceived by pictures, he asked which was the lying sense —Feeling or Seeing? He was never able to imagine any lines beyond the bounds he saw. The room he was in, he said, he knew to be part of the house, yet he could not conceive that the whole house could look bigger. He said every

Digitized by Google

new object was a new delight, and the pleasure was so great that he wanted ways to express it."[1]—Thus, by fact and experiment, those points of the theory which seem the most remote from common apprehension were not a little confirmed, many years after I had been led into the discovery of them by reasoning.

## APPENDIX.

### *A Letter from an Anonymous Writer to the Author of the Minute Philosopher.*[2]

REVEREND SIR,

I have read over your treatise called "Alciphron," in which the Free-thinkers of the present age, in their various shifted tenets, are pleasantly, elegantly, and solidly confuted. The style is easy, the language plain, and the arguments are nervous. But upon the Treatise annexed thereto, and upon that part where you seem to intimate that Vision is the sole Language of God, I beg leave to make these few observations, and offer them to yours and your readers' consideration.

1. Whatever it is without that is the cause of any idea within, I call the *object* of sense; the sensations arising from such objects, I call *ideas*. The objects, therefore, that cause such sensations are without us, and the ideas within.

2. Had we but one sense, we might be apt to conclude that there were no objects at all without us, but that the whole scene of ideas which passed through the mind arose from its internal operations; but since the same object is the cause of ideas by different senses, thence we infer its existence. But, though the object be one and the same, the ideas that it produces in different senses have no manner of similitude with one another. Because,

3. Whatever connexion there is betwixt the idea of one

[1] "Philosophical Transactions," No. 402.

[2] This is the "Letter" referred to in the first note.—ED.



Digitized by Google

sense and the idea of another, produced by the same object, arises only from experience. To explain this a little familiarly, let us suppose a man to have such an exquisite sense of feeling given him that he could perceive plainly and distinctly the inequality of the surface of two objects, which, by its reflecting and refracting the rays of light, produces the ideas of colours. At first, in the dark, though he plainly perceived a difference by his touch, yet he could not possibly tell which was red and which was white, whereas a little experience would make him feel a colour in the dark, as well as see it in the light.

4. The same word in languages stands very often for the object without, and the ideas it produces within, in the several senses. When it stands for any object without, it is the representative of no manner of idea; neither can we possibly have any idea of what is solely without us. Because,

5. Ideas within have no other connexion with the objects without than from the frame and make of our bodies, which is by the arbitrary appointment of God; and, though we cannot well help imagining that the objects without are something like our ideas within, yet a new set of senses, or the alteration of the old ones, would soon convince us of our mistake; and, though our ideas would then be never so different, yet the objects might be the same.

6. However, in the present situation of affairs, there is an infallible certain connexion betwixt the idea and the object; and, therefore, when an object produces an idea in one sense, we know, but from experience only, what idea it will produce in another sense.

7. The alteration of an object may produce a different idea in one sense from what it did before, which may not be distinguished by another sense. But, where the alteration occasions different ideas in different senses, we may, from our infallible experience, argue from the idea of one sense to that of the other; so that, if a different idea arises in two senses from the alteration of an object, either in situation or distance, or any other way, when we have the idea in one sense, we know from use what idea the object so situated will produce in the other.

8. Hence, as the operations of Nature are always regular and uniform, where the same alteration of the object occa-

Digitized by Google

sions a smaller difference in the ideas of one sense, and a greater in the other, a curious observer may argue as well from exact observations as if the difference in the ideas was equal; since experience plainly teaches us that a just proportion is observed in the alteration of the ideas of each sense, from the alteration of the object. Within this sphere is confined all the judicious observations and knowledge of mankind.

Now, from these observations, rightly understood and considered, your "New Theory of Vision" must in a great measure fall to the ground, and the laws of Optics will be found to stand upon the old unshaken bottom. For, though our ideas of magnitude and distance in one sense are entirely different from our ideas of magnitude and distance in another, yet we may justly argue from one to the other, as they have one common cause without, of which, as without, we cannot possibly have the faintest idea. The ideas I have of distance and magnitude by feeling are widely different from the ideas I have of them by seeing; but that something without which is the cause of all the variety of the ideas within, in one sense, is the cause also of the variety in the other; and, as they have a necessary connexion with it, we may very justly demonstrate from our ideas of feeling of the same object what will be our ideas in seeing. And, though to talk of seeing by tangible angles and tangible lines be, I agree with you, direct nonsense, yet to demonstrate from angles and lines in feelings, to the ideas in seeing that arise from the same common object, is very good sense, and so *vice versâ*.

From these observations, thus hastily laid together, and a thorough digestion thereof, a great many useful corollaries in all philosophical disputes might be collected.

I am,

Your humble servant, &c.

END OF VOL. II.

Digitized by Google

CHISWICK PRESS:—CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

Digitized by Google

AN

# ALPHABETICAL LIST

OF BOOKS CONTAINED IN

# BOHN'S LIBRARIES.

*Detailed Catalogue, arranged according to the various Libraries, will be sent on application.*

**ADDISON'S Works.** With the Notes of Bishop Hurd, Portrait, and 8 Plates of Medals and Coins. Edited by H. G. Bohn. 6 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**ÆSCHYLUS, The Dramas of.** Translated into English Verse by Anna Swanwick. 4th Edition, revised. 5*s.*

—— **The Tragedies of.** Newly translated from a revised text by Walter Headlam, Litt.D., and C. E. S. Headlam, M.A. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **The Tragedies of.** Translated into Prose by T. A. Buckley, B.A. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**ALLEN'S (Joseph, R. N.) Battles of the British Navy.** Revised Edition, with 57 Steel Engravings. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

**AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS.** History of Rome during the Reigns of Constantius, Julian, Jovianus, Valentinian, and Valens. Translated by Prof. C. D. Yonge, M.A. 7*s.* 6*d.*

**ANDERSEN'S Danish Legends and Fairy Tales.** Translated by Caroline Peachey. With 120 Wood Engravings. 5*s.*

**ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE.** Edited by J. A. Giles, D.C.L. With a Map. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**ANTONINUS (M. Aurelius), The Thoughts of.** Trans. literally, with Notes and Introduction by George Long, M.A. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**APOLLONIUS RHODIUS.** 'The Argonautica.' Translated by E. P. Coleridge, M.A. 5*s.*

**APPIAN'S Roman History.** Translated by Horace White, M.A., LL.D. With Maps and Illustrations. 2 vols. 6*s.* each.

**APULEIUS, The Works of.** Comprising the Golden Ass, God of Socrates, Florida, and Discourse of Magic. 5*s.*

**ARGYLL (Duke of). The Life of Queen Victoria.** Illustrated. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**ARIOSTO'S Orlando Furioso.** Translated into English Verse by W. S. Rose. With Portrait, and 24 Steel Engravings. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

**ARISTOPHANES' Comedies.** Translated by W. J. Hickie. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

**ARISTOTLE'S Nicomachean Ethics.** Translated, with Introduction and Notes, by the Venerable Archdeacon Browne. 5*s.*

—— **Politics and Economics.** Translated by E. Walford, M.A., with Introduction by Dr. Gillies. 5*s.*

Digitized by Google

**ARISTOTLE'S Metaphysics.** Translated by the Rev. John H. M'Mahon, M.A. 5*s.*

—— **History of Animals.** Trans. by Richard Cresswell, M.A. 5*s.*

—— **Organon**; or, Logical Treatises, and the Introduction of Porphyry. Translated by the Rev. O. F. Owen, M.A. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Rhetoric and Poetics.** Trans. by T. Buckley, B.A. 5*s.*

**ARRIAN'S Anabasis of Alexander**, together with the **Indica.** Translated by E. J. Chinnock, M.A., LL.D. With Maps and Plans. 5*s.*

**ATHENÆUS. The Deipnosophists**; or, the Banquet of the Learned. Trans. by Prof. C. D. Yonge, M.A. 3 vols. 5*s.* each.

**BACON'S Moral and Historical Works**, including the Essays, Apophthegms, Wisdom of the Ancients, New Atlantis, Henry VII., Henry VIII., Elizabeth, Henry Prince of Wales, History of Great Britain, Julius Cæsar, and Augustus Cæsar. Edited by J. Devey, M.A. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Novum Organum and Advancement of Learning.** Edited by J. Devey, M.A. 5*s.*

**BASS'S Lexicon to the Greek Testament.** 2*s.*

**BAX'S Handbook of the History of Philosophy.** for the use of Students. By E. Belfort Bax. 3rd Edition, revised. 5*s.*

**BAYEUX Tapestry, The.** Reproduced in 79 Half-tone Plates from Photographs originally taken for the Department of Science and Art. With a Historical Description and Commentary by Frank Rede Fowke, of that Department. 5*s.*

**BEAUMONT and FLETCHER**, their finest Scenes, Lyrics, and other Beauties, selected from the whole of their works, and edited by Leigh Hunt. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**BECHSTEIN'S Cage and Chamber Birds**, their Natural History, Habits, Food, Diseases, and Modes of Capture. Translated, with considerable additions on Structure, Migration, and Economy, by H. G. Adams. Together with SWEET'S BRITISH WARBLERS. With 43 coloured Plates and Woodcut Illustrations. 5*s.*

**BEDE'S (Venerable) Ecclesiastical History of England.** Revised Translation. With Introduction, Life, and Notes by A. M. Sellar, late Vice-Principal Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. 5*s.*

**BELL (Sir Charles). The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression, as connected with the Fine Arts.** By Sir Charles Bell, K.H. 5*s.*

**BERKELEY (George), Bishop of Cloyne, The Works of.** Edited by George Sampson. With Biographical Introduction by the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, M.P. 3 vols. 5*s.* each.

**BION.** *See* THEOCRITUS.

**BJÖRNSON'S Arne and the Fisher Lassie.** Translated by W. H. Low, M.A. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**BLAIR'S Chronological Tables** Revised and Enlarged. Comprehending the Chronology and History of the World, from the Earliest Times to the Russian Treaty of Peace, April 1856. By J. Willoughby Rosse. Double vol. 10*s.*

**BLEEK'S Introduction to the Old Testament.** By Friedrich Bleek. Edited by Johann Bleek and Adolf Kamphausen. Translated by G. H. Venables, under the supervision of the Rev. Canon

Digitized by Google

Venables. 2 vols. 2nd Edition. 5*s*. each.

**BOETHIUS'S Consolation of Philosophy.** King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon Version of. With a literal English Translation on opposite pages, Notes, Introduction, and Glossary, by the Rev. S. Fox, M.A. 5*s*.

**BOHN'S Dictionary of Poetical Quotations.** 4th Edition. 6*s*.

**BOHN'S Handbooks of Games.** New edition. In 2 vols., with numerous Illustrations 3*s*. 6*d*. each.

Vol. I.—TABLE GAMES:—Billiards, Bagatelle, Chess, Draughts, Backgammon, Dominoes, Solitaire, Reversi, Go-Bang, Rouge et Noir, Roulette, E.O., Hazard, Faro.

Vol. II. — CARD GAMES: — Whist, Solo Whist, Poker, Piquet, Ecarté, Euchre, Bézique, Cribbage, Loo, Vingt-et-un, Napoleon, Newmarket, Pope Joan, Speculation, &c., &c.

**BOND'S A Handy Book of Rules and Tables** for verifying Dates with the Christian Era, &c. Giving an account of the Chief Eras and Systems used by various Nations; with the easy Methods for determining the Corresponding Dates. By J. J. Bond. 5*s*.

**BONOMI'S Nineveh and its Palaces.** 7 Plates and 294 Woodcut Illustrations. 5*s*.

**BOSWELL'S Life of Johnson,** with the TOUR IN THE HEBRIDES and JOHNSONIANA. Edited by the Rev. A. Napier, M.A. With Frontispiece to each vol. 6 vols. 3*s*. 6*d*. each.

**BRAND'S Popular Antiquities of England, Scotland, and Ireland.** Arranged, revised, and greatly enlarged, by Sir Henry Ellis, K.H., F.R.S., &c., &c. 3 vols. 5*s*. each.

**BREMER'S (Frederika) Works.** Translated by Mary Howitt. 4 vols. 3*s*. 6*d*. each.

**BRIDGWATER TREATISES.**

**Bell (Sir Charles) on the Hand.** With numerous Woodcuts. 5*s*.

**Kirby on the History, Habits, and Instincts of Animals.** Edited by T. Rymer Jones. With upwards of 100 Woodcuts. Vol. I., 5*s*. Vol. II. out of print

**Kidd on the Adaptation of External Nature to the Physical Condition of Man.** 3*s*. 6*d*.

**Chalmers on the Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man.** 5*s*.

**BRINK (B. ten) Early English Literature.** By Bernhard ten Brink. Vol. I. To Wyclif. Translated by Horace M. Kennedy. 3*s*. 6*d*.

Vol. II. Wyclif, Chaucer, Earliest Drams, Renaissance. Translated by W. Clarke Robinson, Ph.D. 3*s*. 6*d*.

Vol. III. From the Fourteenth Century to the Death of Surrey. Edited by Dr. Alois Brandl. Trans. by L. Dora Schmitz. 3*s*. 6*d*.

—— **Five Lectures on Shakespeare.** Trans. by Julia Franklin. 3*s*. 6*d*.

**BRONTË (Charlotte). Jane Eyre.** With an Introduction by Clement Shorter, and Illustrations in Colour and Black-and-white by M. V. Wheelhouse. 3*s*. 6*d*.

**BROWNE'S (Sir Thomas) Works** Edited by Simon Wilkin. 3 vols. 3*s*. 6*d*. each.

Digitized by Google

**BURKE'S Works.** 8 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

I.—Vindication of Natural Society—Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, and various Political Miscellanies.

II.—Reflections on the French Revolution — Letters relating to the Bristol Election — Speech on Fox's East India Bill, &c.

III.—Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs—On the Nabob of Arcot's Debts—The Catholic Claims, &c.

IV.—Report on the Affairs of India, and Articles of Charge against Warren Hastings.

V.—Conclusion of the Articles of Charge against Warren Hastings—Political Letters on the American War, on a Regicide Peace, to the Empress of Russia.

VI.—Miscellaneous Speeches—Letters and Fragments—Abridgments of English History, &c. With a General Index.

VII. & VIII.—Speeches on the Impeachment of Warren Hastings; and Letters. With Index.

—— **Life.** By Sir J. Prior. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**BURNEY. The Early Diary of Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay), 1768-1778.** With a selection from her Correspondence and from the Journals of her sisters, Susan and Charlotte Burney. Edited by Annie Raine Ellis. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Evelina.** By Frances Burney (Mme. D'Arblay). With an Introduction and Notes by A. R. Ellis. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Cecilia.** With an Introduction and Notes by A. R. Ellis. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**BURN (R.) Ancient Rome and its Neighbourhood.** An Illustrated Handbook to the Ruins in the City and the Campagna, for the use of Travellers. By Robert Burn, M.A. With numerous Illustrations, Maps, and Plans. 7*s.* 6*d.*

**BURNS (Robert), Life of.** By J. G. Lockhart, D.C.L. A new and enlarged Edition. Revised by William Scott Douglas. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**BURTON'S (Robert) Anatomy of Melancholy.** Edited by the Rev. A. R. Shilleto, M.A. With Introduction by A. H. Bullen, and full Index. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**BURTON (Sir R. F.) Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah.** By Captain Sir Richard F. Burton, K.C.M.G. With an Introduction by Stanley Lane-Poole, and all the original Illustrations. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

*** This is the copyright edition, containing the author's latest notes.

**BUTLER'S (Bishop) Analogy of Religion,** Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature; together with two Dissertations on Personal Identity and on the Nature of Virtue, and Fifteen Sermons. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Sermons.** A New Edition. Edited, with Introduction, Notes, and Analyses by the Rev. W. R. Matthews, M.A., B.D., Lecturer in Theology and Philosophy at King's College, University of London. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**BUTLER'S (Samuel) Hudibras.** With Variorum Notes, a Biography, Portrait, and 28 Illustrations. 5*s.*

—— or, further Illustrated with 60 Outline Portraits. 2 vols. 5*s.* each

Digitized by Google

**CÆSAR. Commentaries on the Gallic and Civil Wars.** Translated by W. A. McDevitte, B.A. 5*s.*

**CARLYLE'S French Revolution.** Edited by J. Holland Rose, Litt.D. Illus. 3 vols. 5*s.* each.

—— **Sartor Resartus.** New Edition. With 75 Illustrations by Edmund J. Sullivan. 5*s.*

—— **A Selection** of the Finest Passages from his Writings. Edited, with Biographical and Critical Introduction, by A. W. Evans. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**CARPENTER'S (Dr. W. B.) Zoology.** Revised Edition, by W. S. Dallas, F.L.S. With very numerous Woodcuts. Vol. I. 6*s.* [*Vol. II. out of print.*

**CARPENTER'S Mechanical Philosophy, Astronomy, and Horology.** 181 Woodcuts. 5*s.*

—— **Vegetable Physiology and Systematic Botany.** Revised Edition, by E. Lankester, M.D., &c. With very numerous Woodcuts. 6*s.*

—— **Animal Physiology.** Revised Edition. With upwards of 300 Woodcuts. 6*s.*

**CASTLE (E.) Schools and Masters of Fence,** from the Middle Ages to the End of the Eighteenth Century. By Egerton Castle, M.A., F.S.A. With a Complete Bibliography. Illustrated with 140 Reproductions of Old Engravings and 6 Plates of Swords, showing 114 Examples. 6*s.*

**CATTERMOLE'S Evenings at Haddon Hall.** With 24 Engravings on Steel from designs by Cattermole, the Letterpress by the Baroness de Carabella. 5*s.*

**CATULLUS, Tibullus, and the Vigil of Venus.** A Literal Prose Translation. 5*s.*

**CERVANTES' Don Quixote de la Mancha** Motteux's Translation revised. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Galatea.** A Pastoral Romance. Translated by G. W. J. Gyll. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Exemplary Novels.** Translated by Walter K. Kelly. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**CHAUCER'S Poetical Works.** Edited by Robert Bell. Revised Edition, with a Preliminary Essay by Prof. W. W. Skeat, M.A. 4 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**CHEVREUL on Colour.** Translated from the French by Charles Martel. Third Edition, with Plates, 5*s.*; or with an additional series of 16 Plates in Colours, 7*s.* 6*d.*

**CHINA, Pictorial, Descriptive, and Historical.** With Map and nearly 100 Illustrations. 5*s.*

**CHRONICLES OF THE CRUSADES.** Contemporary Narratives of the Crusade of Richard Cœur de Lion, by Richard of Devizes and Geoffrey de Vinsauf; and of the Crusade at St. Louis, by Lord John de Joinville. 5*s.*

**CHRONICLES OF THE TOMBS.** A Collection of Epitaphs by T. J. Pettigrew, F.R.S. 5*s.*

**CICERO'S Orations.** Translated by Prof. C. D. Yonge, M.A. 4 vols. 5*s.* each.

Digitized by Google

**CICERO'S Letters.** Translated by Evelyn S. Shuckburgh. 4 vols. 5*s.* each.

—— **On Oratory and Orators.** With Letters to Quintus and Brutus. Translated by the Rev. J. S. Watson, M.A. 5*s.*

—— **On the Nature of the Gods,** Divination, Fate, Laws, a Republic, Consulship. Translated by Prof. C. D. Yonge, M.A., and Francis Barham. 5*s.*

—— **Academics,** De Finibus, and Tusculan Questions. By Prof. C. D. Yonge, M.A. 5*s.*

—— **Offices;** or, Moral Duties. Cato Major, an Essay on Old Age; Lælius, an Essay on Friendship; Scipio's Dream; Paradoxes; Letter to Quintus on Magistrates. Translated by C. R. Edmonds. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**CLARK'S (Hugh) Introduction to Heraldry.** 18th Edition, Revised and Enlarged by J. R. Planché, Rouge Croix. With nearly 1000 Illustrations. 5*s.* Or with the Illustrations Coloured, 15*s.*

**CLASSIC TALES,** containing Rasselas, Vicar of Wakefield, Gulliver's Travels, and The Sentimental Journey. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**COLERIDGE'S (S. T.) Friend.** A Series of Essays on Morals, Politics, and Religion. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Aids to Reflection,** and the CONFESSIONS OF AN INQUIRING SPIRIT, to which are added the ESSAYS ON FAITH and the BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare and other English Poets.** Edited by T. Ashe. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**COLERIDGE'S Biographia Literaria;** together with Two Lay Sermons. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Biographia Epistolaris.** Edited by Arthur Turnbull. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Table-Talk and Omniana.** Edited by T. Ashe, B.A. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Miscellanies, Æsthetic and Literary;** to which is added, THE THEORY OF LIFE. Collected and arranged by T. Ashe, B.A. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**COMTE'S Positive Philosophy.** Translated and condensed by Harriet Martineau. With Introduction by Frederic Harrison. 3 vols. 5*s.* each.

—— **Philosophy of the Sciences,** being an Exposition of the Principles of the *Cours de Philosophie Positive.* By G. H. Lewes. 5*s.*

**CONDÉ'S History of the Dominion of the Arabs in Spain.** Translated by Mrs. Foster. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**COOPER'S Biographical Dictionary.** Containing Concise Notices (upwards of 15,000) of Eminent Persons of all Ages and Countries. By Thompson Cooper, F.S.A. With a Supplement, bringing the work down to 1883. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

**CORNELIUS NEPOS.**—*See* JUSTIN.

**COXE'S Memoirs of the Duke of Marlborough.** With his original Correspondence. By W. Coxe, M.A., F.R.S. Revised edition by John Wade. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**CRAIK'S (G. L.) Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties.** Illustrated by Anecdotes and Memoirs.

Digitized by Google

Revised edition, with numerous Woodcut Portraits and Plates. 5*s.*

**CUNNINGHAM'S Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters.** A New Edition, with Notes and Sixteen fresh Lives. By Mrs. Heaton. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**DANTE. Divine Comedy.** Translated by the Rev. H. F. Cary, M.A. New Edition, by M. L. Egerton-Castle. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— Translated into English Verse by I. C. Wright, M.A. 3rd Edition, revised. With Portrait, and 34 Illustrations on Steel, after Flaxman.

**DANTE. The Inferno.** A Literal Prose Translation, with the Text of the Original printed on the same page. By John A. Carlyle, M.D. 2nd Edition. 5*s.*

**DE COMMINES (Philip), Memoirs of.** Containing the Histories of Louis XI. and Charles VIII., Kings of France, and Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. Together with the Scandalous Chronicle, or Secret History of Louis XI., by Jean de Troyes. Translated by Andrew R. Scoble. With Portraits. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**DEFOE'S Novels and Miscellaneous Works.** With Prefaces and Notes, including those attributed to Sir W. Scott. 7 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

I.—Captain Singleton, and Colonel Jack.

II.—Memoirs of a Cavalier, Captain Carleton, Dickory Cronke, &c.

III.—Moll Flanders, and the History of the Devil.

IV.—Roxana, and Life of Mrs. Christian Davies.

DEFOE'S NOVELS AND MISCELLANEOUS WORKS—*continued.*

V.—History of the Great Plague of London, 1665; The Storm (1703); and the True-born Englishman.

VI.—Duncan Campbell, New Voyage round the World, and Political Tracts.

VII.—Robinson Crusoe. 3*s.* 6*d.* Also with 86 Illustrations. 5*s.*

—— **A Selection** of the Finest Passages from his Writings. Edited, with Biographical and Critical Introduction, by John Masefield. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**DEMMIN'S History of Arms and Armour,** from the Earliest Period. By Auguste Demmin. Translated by C. C. Black, M.A. With nearly 2000 Illustrations. 7*s.* 6*d.*

**DEMOSTHENES' Orations.** Translated by C. Rann Kennedy. 5 vols. Vol. I., 3*s.* 6*d.*; Vols. II.–V., 5*s.* each.

**DE QUINCEY (T.) A Selection** of the Finest Passages from his Writings. Edited, with Biographical and Critical Introduction, by Sidney Low. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**DE STAËL'S Corinne or Italy.** By Madame de Staël. Translated by Emily Baldwin and Paulina Driver. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**DICTIONARY of Latin and Greek Quotations;** including Proverbs, Maxims, Mottoes, Law Terms and Phrases. With all the Quantities marked, and English Translations. With Index Verborum (622 pages). 5*s.*

**DICTIONARY of Obsolete and Provincial English.** Compiled by Thomas Wright, M.A., F.S.A., &c. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

Digitized by Google

**DIDRON'S Christian Iconography**: a History of Christian Art in the Middle Ages. Translated by E. J. Millington and completed by Margaret Stokes With 240 Illustrations. 2 vols. 5*s*. each.

**DIOGENES LAERTIUS. Lives and Opinions of the Ancient Philosophers.** Translated by Prof. C. D. Yonge, M.A. 5*s*.

**DOBREE'S Adversaria.** Edited by the late Prof. Wagner. 2 vols. 5*s*. each.

**DONALDSON'S The Theatre of the Greeks.** A Treatise on the History and Exhibition of the Greek Drama. With numerous Illustrations and 3 Plans. By John William Donaldson, D.D. 8th Edition. 5*s*.

**DRAPER'S History of the Intellectual Development of Europe.** By John William Draper, M.D., LL.D. 2 vols. 5*s*. each.

**DUNLOP'S History of Fiction.** A new Edition. Revised by Henry Wilson. 2 vols. 5*s*. each.

**DYER'S History of Modern Europe**, from the Fall of Constantinople. 3rd edition, revised and continued to the end of the Nineteenth Century. By Arthur Hassall, M.A. 6 vols. 3*s*. 6*d* each.

**DYER'S (Dr T. H.) Pompeii**: its Buildings and Antiquities. By T. H. Dyer, LL.D. With nearly 300 Wood Engravings, a large Map, and a Plan of the Forum. 7*s*. 6*d*.

**DYER (T. F. T.) British Popular Customs, Present and Past.** An Account of the various Games and Customs associated with Different Days of the Year in the British Isles, arranged according to the Calendar. By the Rev. T. F. Thiselton Dyer, M.A. 5*s*.

**EBERS' Egyptian Princess.** An Historical Novel. By George Ebers. Translated by E. S. Buchheim. 3*s*. 6*d*.

**EDGEWORTH'S Stories for Children.** With 8 Illustrations by L. Speed. 3*s*. 6*d*.

**ELZE'S William Shakespeare.** —*See* SHAKESPEARE.

**EMERSON'S Works.** 5 vols. 3*s*. 6*d*. each.

I.—Essays and Representative Men.

II.—English Traits, Nature, and Conduct of Life.

III.—Society and Solitude—Letters and Social Aims—Addresses.

IV.—Miscellaneous Pieces.

V.—Poems.

—— **A Selection** of the Finest Passages from his Writings. Edited, with Biographical and Critical Introduction, by G. H. Perris. 3*s*. 6*d*.

**EPICTETUS, The Discourses of.** With the ENCHEIRIDION and Fragments. Translated by George Long, M.A. 5*s*.

**EURIPIDES.** A New Literal Translation in Prose. By E. P. Coleridge, M.A. 2 vols. 5*s*. each.

**EUTROPIUS.**—*See* JUSTIN.

**EUSEBIUS PAMPHILUS, Ecclesiastical History of.** Translated by Rev. C. F. Cruse, M.A. 5*s*.

**EVELYN'S Diary and Correspondence.** Edited from the Original MSS. by W. Bray, F.A.S. With 45 engravings. 4 vols. 5*s*. each.

**FAIRHOLT'S Costume in England.** A History of Dress to the end of the Eighteenth Century. 3rd Edition, revised, by Viscount Dillon, V.P.S.A. Illustrated with above 700 Engravings. 2 vols. 5*s*. each.

Digitized by Google

**FIELDING'S Adventures of Joseph Andrews and his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams.** With Cruikshank's Illustrations. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **History of Tom Jones, a Foundling.** With Cruikshank's Illustrations. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Amelia.** With Cruikshank's Illustrations. 5*s.*

—— **A Selection** of the Finest Passages from his Writings. Edited, with Biographical and Critical Introduction, by Professor George Saintsbury. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**FLAXMAN'S Lectures on Sculpture.** By John Flaxman, R.A. New Edition. With Portrait and 53 Plates. 6*s.*

**FOSTER'S (John) Essays:** on Decision of Character; on a Man's writing Memoirs of Himself; on the epithet Romantic; on the aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Essays** on the Improvement of Time. With NOTES OF SERMONS and other Pieces. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**GASKELL (Mrs.) Sylvia's Lovers.** With Illustrations in Colour by M. V. Wheelhouse. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**GASPARY'S History of Italian Literature to the Death of Dante.** Translated by Herman Oelsner, M.A., Ph.D. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH, Chronicle of.**—*See Old English Chronicles.*

**GESTA ROMANORUM,** or Entertaining Moral Stories invented by the Monks. Translated by the Rev. Charles Swan. Revised Edition, by Wynnard Hooper, B.A. 5*s.*

**GILDAS, Chronicles of.**—*See Old English Chronicles.*

**GIBBON'S Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.** Complete and Unabridged, with Variorum Notes. Edited by an English Churchman. With 2 Maps and Portrait. 7 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**GILBART'S History, Principles, and Practice of Banking.** By the late J. W. Gilbart, F.R.S. New Edition (1907), revised by Ernest Sykes. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

**GIL BLAS, The Adventures of.** Translated from the French of Lesage by Smollett. With 24 Engravings on Steel, after Smirke, and 10 Etchings by George Cruikshank. 6*s.*

**GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS' Historical Works.** Translated by Th. Forester, M.A., and Sir R. Colt Hoare. Revised Edition, Edited by Thomas Wright, M.A., F.S.A. 5*s.*

**GOETHE'S Faust.** Part I. German Text with Hayward's Prose Translation and Notes. Revised by C. A. Buchheim, Ph.D. 5*s.*

**GOETHE'S Works.** Translated into English by various hands. 14 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

I. and II.—Poetry and Truth from My Own Life. New and revised edition.
III.—Faust. Two Parts, complete. (Swanwick.)
IV.—Novels and Tales.
V.—Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship.
VI.—Conversations with Eckermann and Soret.
VII.—Poems and Ballads.
VIII.—Dramatic Works.
IX.—Wilhelm Meister's Travels.
X.—Tour in Italy, and Second Residence in Rome.
XI.—Miscellaneous Travels.
XII.—Early and Miscellaneous Letters.
XIII.—Correspondence with Zelter (out of print).
XIV.—Reineke Fox, West-Eastern Divan and Achilleid.

Digitized by Google

**GOLDSMITH'S Works.** A new Edition, by J. W. M. Gibbs. 5 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**GRAMMONT'S Memoirs of the Court of Charles II.** Edited by Sir Walter Scott. Together with the BOSCOBEL TRACTS, including two not before published, &c. New Edition. 5*s.*

**GRAY'S Letters.** Including the Correspondence of Gray and Mason. Edited by the Rev. D. C. Tovey, M.A. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**GREEK ANTHOLOGY.** Translated by George Burges, M.A. 5*s.*

**GREEK ROMANCES of Heliodorus, Longus, and Achilles Tatius**—viz., The Adventures of Theagenes & Chariclea; Amours of Daphnis and Chloe; and Loves of Clitopho and Leucippe. Translated by Rev. R. Smith, M.A. 5*s.*

**GREENE, MARLOWE, and BEN JONSON.** Poems of. Edited by Robert Bell. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**GREGOROVIUS, ROMAN JOURNALS, 1852-1874.** Edited by Friedrich Althaus. Translated from the Second German Edition by Mrs. Gustave W. Hamilton. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**GREGORY'S Letters on the Evidences, Doctrines, & Duties of the Christian Religion.** By Dr. Olinthus Gregory. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**GRIMM'S TALES.** With the Notes of the Original. Translated by Mrs. A. Hunt. With Introduction by Andrew Lang, M.A. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Gammer Grethel**; or, German Fairy Tales and Popular Stories. Containing 42 Fairy Tales. Trans. by Edgar Taylor. With numerous Woodcuts after George Cruikshank and Ludwig Grimm. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**GROSSI'S Marco Visconti.** Translated by A. F. D. The Ballads rendered into English Verse by C. M. P. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**GUIZOT'S History of the English Revolution of 1640.** From the Accession of Charles I. to his Death. Translated by William Hazlitt. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **History of Civilisation, from** the Fall of the Roman Empire to the French Revolution. Translated by William Hazlitt. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**HALL'S (Rev. Robert) Miscellaneous Works and Remains.** 3*s.* 6*d.*

**HAMPTON COURT: A Short History of the Manor and Palace.** By Ernest Law, B.A. With numerous Illustrations. 5*s.*

**HARDWICK'S History of the Articles of Religion.** By the late C. Hardwick. Revised by the Rev. Francis Procter, M.A. 3rd and cheaper Edition. 5*s.*

**HAUFF'S Tales.** The Caravan—The Sheik of Alexandria—The Inn in the Spessart. Trans. from the German by S. Mendel. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**HAWTHORNE'S Tales.** 4 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

I.—Twice-told Tales, and the Snow Image.

II.—Scarlet Letter, and the House with the Seven Gables.

III.—Transformation [The Marble Faun], and Blithedale Romance.

IV.—Mosses from an Old Manse.

Digitized by Google

**HAZLITT'S Table-talk.** Essays on Men and Manners. By W. Hazlitt. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth** and on Characters of Shakespeare's Plays. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Lectures on the English Poets,** and on the English Comic Writers. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **The Plain Speaker.** Opinions on Books, Men, and Things. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Round Table.** 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Sketches and Essays.** 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **The Spirit of the Age;** or, Contemporary Portraits. Edited by W. Carew Hazlitt. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **View of the English Stage.** Edited by W. Spencer Jackson. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**HEATON'S Concise History of Painting.** New Edition, revised by Cosmo Monkhouse. 5*s.*

**HEINE'S Poems,** Complete Translated by Edgar A. Bowring, C.B. 2nd Edition, revised. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Travel-Pictures,** including the Tour in the Harz, Norderney, and Book of Ideas, together with the Romantic School. Translated by Francis Storr. A New Edition, revised throughout. With Appendices and Maps. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**HELIODORUS. Theagenes and Chariclea.** — *See* GREEK ROMANCES.

**HELP'S Life of Christopher Columbus,** the Discoverer of America. By Sir Arthur Helps, K.C.B. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Life of Hernando Cortes,** and the Conquest of Mexico. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**HELP'S Life of Pizarro.** 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Life of Las Casas** the Apostle of the Indies. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**HENDERSON (E.) Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages,** including the most famous Charters relating to England, the Empire, the Church, &c., from the 6th to the 14th Centuries. Translated from the Latin and edited by Ernest F. Henderson, A.B., A.M., Ph.D. 5*s.*

**HENFREY'S Guide to English Coins,** from the Conquest to 1885. New and revised Edition by C. F. Keary, M.A., F.S.A. 6*s.*

**HENRY OF HUNTINGDON'S History of the English.** Translated by T. Forester, M.A. 5*s.*

**HENRY'S (Matthew) Exposition of the Book of the Psalms.** 5*s.*

**HERODOTUS.** Translated by the Rev. Henry Cary, M.A. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Analysis and Summary of** By J. T. Wheeler. 5*s.*

**HESIOD, CALLIMACHUS, and THEOGNIS.** Translated by the Rev. J. Banks, M.A. 5*s.*

**HOFFMANN'S (E. T. W.) The Serapion Brethren.** Translated from the German by Lt.-Col. Alex. Ewing. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**HOLBEIN'S Dance of Death and Bible Cuts.** Upwards of 150 Subjects, engraved in facsimile, with Introduction and Descriptions by Francis Douce and Dr. Thomas Frognall Dibden. 5*s.*

**HOMER'S Iliad.** A new translation by E. H. Blakeney, M.A. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Translated into English Prose** by T. A. Buckley, B.A. 5*s.*

Digitized by Google

**HOMER'S Odyssey.** Hymns, Epigrams, and Battle of the Frogs and Mice. Translated into English Prose by T. A. Buckley, B.A. 5*s.*

—— *See also* POPE.

**HOOPER'S (G.) Waterloo: The Downfall of the First Napoleon:** a History of the Campaign of 1815. By George Hooper. With Maps and Plans. New Edition. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **The Campaign of Sedan:** The Downfall of the Second Empire, August – September, 1870. With General Map and Six Plans of Battle. New Edition. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**HORACE.** A new literal Prose translation, by A. Hamilton Bryce, LL.D. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**HUGO'S (Victor) Dramatic Works.** Hernani—Ruy Blas—The King's Diversion. Translated by Mrs. Newton Crosland and F. L. Slous. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Poems, chiefly Lyrical.** Translated by various Writers, now first collected by J. H. L. Williams. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**HUMBOLDT'S Cosmos.** Translated by E. C. Otté, B. H. Paul, and W. S. Dallas, F.L.S. 5 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each, excepting Vol. V. 5*s.*

—— **Personal Narrative** of his Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of America during the years 1799–1804. Translated by T. Ross. 3 vols. 5*s.* each.

—— **Views of Nature.** Translated by E. C. Otté and H. G. Bohn. 5*s.*

**HUMPHREYS' Coin Collector's Manual.** By H. N. Humphreys. with upwards of 140 Illustrations on Wood and Steel. 2 vols. 5*s.* each. (Vol. I. out of print.)

**HUNGARY: its History and Revolution,** together with a copious Memoir of Kossuth. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**HUTCHINSON (Colonel). Memoirs of the Life of.** By his Widow, Lucy: together with her Autobiography, and an Account of the Siege of Lathom House. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**INGULPH'S Chronicles of the Abbey of Croyland,** with the CONTINUATION by Peter of Blois and other Writers. Translated by H. T. Riley, M.A. 5*s.*

**IRVING'S (Washington) Complete Works.** 15 vols. With Portraits, &c. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

I.—Salmagundi, Knickerbocker's History of New York.

II.—The Sketch-Book, and the Life of Oliver Goldsmith.

III.—Bracebridge Hall, Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey.

IV.—The Alhambra, Tales of a Traveller.

V.—Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada, Legends of the Conquest of Spain.

VI. & VII.—Life and Voyages of Columbus, together with the Voyages of his Companions.

VIII.—Astoria, A Tour on the Prairies.

IX.—Life of Mahomet, Lives of the Successors of Mahomet.

X.—Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A., Wolfert's Roost.

XI.—Biographies and Miscellaneous Papers. (Out of print).

XII.–XV.—Life of George Washington. 4 vols.

Digitized by Google

**IRVING'S (Washington) Life and Letters.** By his Nephew, Pierre E. Irving. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**ISOCRATES, The Orations of.** Translated by J. H. Freese, M.A. Vol. I. 5*s.*

**JAMES'S (G. P. R.) Life of Richard Cœur de Lion.** 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each. (Vol. I. out of print.)

**JAMESON'S (Mrs.) Shakespeare's Heroines.** Characteristics of Women: Moral, Poetical, and Historical. By Mrs. Jameson. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**JESSE'S (E.) Anecdotes of Dogs.** With 40 Woodcuts and 34 Steel Engravings. 5*s.*

**JESSE'S (J. H.) Memoirs of the Court of England during the Reign of the Stuarts,** including the Protectorate. 3 vols. With 42 Portraits. 5*s.* each.

—— **Memoirs of the Pretenders and their Adherents.** With 6 Portraits. 5*s.*

**JOHNSON'S Lives of the Poets.** Edited by Mrs. Alexander Napier, with Introduction by Professor Hales. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**JOSEPHUS (Flavius), The Works of.** Whiston's Translation, revised by Rev. A. R. Shilleto, M.A With Topographical and Geographical Notes by Colonel Sir C. W. Wilson, K.C.B. 5 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**JULIAN, the Emperor.** Containing Gregory Nazianzen's Two Invectives and Libanus' Monody, with Julian's extant Theosophical Works. Translated by C. W. King, M.A. 5*s.*

**JUNIUS'S Letters.** With all the Notes of Woodfall's Edition, and important Additions. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**JUSTIN CORNELIUS NEPOS, and EUTROPIUS.** Translated by the Rev. J. S. Watson, M.A. 5*s.*

**JUVENAL, PERSIUS, SULPICIA and LUCILIUS.** Translated by L. Evans, M.A. 5*s.*

**KANT'S Critique of Pure Reason.** Translated by J. M. D. Meiklejohn. 5*s.*

—— **Prolegomena and Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science.** Translated by E. Belfort Bax. 5*s.*

**KEIGHTLEY'S (Thomas) Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy.** 4th Edition, revised by Leonard Schmitz, Ph.D., LL.D. With 12 Plates from the Antique. 5*s.*

**KEIGHTLEY'S Fairy Mythology,** illustrative of the Romance and Superstition of Various Countries. Revised Edition, with Frontispiece by Cruikshank. 5*s.*

**LA FONTAINE'S Fables.** Translated into English Verse by Elizur Wright. New Edition, with Notes by J. W. M. Gibbs. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**LAMARTINE'S History of the Girondists.** Translated by H. T. Ryde. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **History of the Restoration of Monarchy in France** (a Sequel to the History of the Girondists). 4 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**LAMB'S (Charles) Essays of Elia and Eliana.** Complete Edition. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Digitized by Google

**LAMB'S (Charles) Specimens of English Dramatic Poets of the Time of Elizabeth.** 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Memorials and Letters of Charles Lamb.** By Serjeant Talfourd. New Edition, revised, by W. Carew Hazlitt. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Tales from Shakespeare.** With Illustrations by Byam Shaw. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**LANE'S Arabian Nights' Entertainments.** Edited by Stanley Lane-Poole, M.A., Litt.D. . 4 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**LAPPENBERG'S History of England under the Anglo-Saxon Kings.** Translated by B. Thorpe, F.S.A. New edition, revised by E. C. Otté. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**LEONARDO DA VINCI'S Treatise on Painting.** Translated by J. F. Rigaud, R.A., With a Life of Leonardo by John William Brown. New Edition. With numerous Plates. 5*s.*

**LEPSIUS'S Letters from Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Peninsula of Sinai.** Translated by L. and J. B. Horner. With Maps. 5*s.*

**LESSING'S Dramatic Works,** Complete. Edited by Ernest Bell, M.A. With Memoir of Lessing by Helen Zimmern. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Laokoon, Dramatic Notes, and the Representation of Death by the Ancients.** Translated by E. C. Beasley and Helen Zimmern. Edited by Edward Bell, M.A. With a Frontispiece of the Laokoon group. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**LILLY'S Introduction to Astrology.** With a GRAMMAR OF ASTROLOGY and Tables for Calculating Nativities, by Zadkiel. 5*s.*

**LIVY'S History of Rome.** Translated by Dr. Spillan, C. Edmonds, and others. 4 vols. 5*s.* each.

**LOCKE'S Philosophical Works.** Edited by J. A. St. John. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**LOCKHART (J. G.)**—*See* BURNS.

**LODGE'S Portraits of Illustrious Personages of Great Britain,** with Biographical and Historical Memoirs. 240 Portraits engraved on Steel, with the respective Biographies unabridged. 8 vols. 5*s.* each.

**LOUDON'S (Mrs.) Natural History.** Revised edition, by W. S. Dallas, F.L.S. With numerous Woodcut Illus. 5*s.*

**LOWNDES' Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature.** Enlarged Edition. By H. G. Bohn. 6 vols. cloth, 5*s.* each. Or 4 vols. half morocco, 2*l.* 2*s.*

**LONGUS. Daphnis and Chloe.** —*See* GREEK ROMANCES.

**LUCAN'S Pharsalia.** Translated by H. T. Riley, M.A. 5*s.*

**LUCIAN'S Dialogues of the Gods, of the Sea Gods, and of the Dead.** Translated by Howard Williams, M.A. 5*s.*

**LUCRETIUS. A Prose Translation.** By H. A. J. Munro. Reprinted from the Final (4th) Edition. With an Introduction by J. D. Duff, M.A. 5*s.*

—— **Literally translated.** By the Rev. J. S. Watson, M.A. With a Metrical Version by J. M. Good. 5*s.*

Digitized by Google

**LUTHER'S Table-Talk.** Translated and Edited by William Hazlitt. *3s. 6d.*

—— **Autobiography.** — *See* MICHELET.

**MACHIAVELLI'S History of Florence,** together with the Prince, Savonarola, various Historical Tracts, and a Memoir of Machiavelli. *3s. 6d.*

**MALLET'S Northern Antiquities,** or an Historical Account of the Manners, Customs, Religions and Laws, Maritime Expeditions and Discoveries, Language and Literature, of the Ancient Scandinavians. Translated by Bishop Percy. Revised and Enlarged Edition, with a Translation of the PROSE EDDA, by J. A. Blackwell. *5s.*

**MANZONI. The Betrothed:** being a Translation of 'I Promessi Sposi.' By Alessandro Manzoni. With numerous Woodcuts. *5s.*

**MARCO POLO'S Travels;** the Translation of Marsden revised by T. Wright, M.A., F.S.A. *5s.*

**MARRYAT'S (Capt. R.N.) Masterman Ready.** With 93 Woodcuts. *3s. 6d.*

—— **Mission;** or, Scenes in Africa. Illustrated by Gilbert and Dalziel. *3s. 6d.*

—— **Pirate and Three Cutters.** With 8 Steel Engravings, from Drawings by Clarkson Stanfield, R.A. *3s. 6d.*

—— **Privateersman.** 8 Engravings on Steel. *3s. 6d.*

—— **Settlers in Canada.** 10 Engravings by Gilbert and Dalziel. *3s. 6d.*

**MARRYAT'S (Capt. R.N.) Poor Jack.** With 16 Illustrations after Clarkson Stansfield, R.A. *3s. 6d.*

—— **Peter Simple.** With 8 full-page Illustrations. *3s. 6d.*

**MARTIAL'S Epigrams,** complete. Translated into Prose, each accompanied by one or more Verse Translations selected from the Works of English Poets, and other sources. *7s. 6d.*

**MARTINEAU'S (Harriet) History of England,** from 1800–1815. *3s. 6d.*

—— **History of the Thirty Years' Peace,** A.D. 1815–46. 4 vols. *3s. 6d.* each.

—— *See Comte's Positive Philosophy.*

**MATTHEW OF WESTMINSTER'S Flowers of History,** from the beginning of the World to A.D. 1307. Translated by C. D. Yonge, M.A. 2 vols. *5s.* each.

**MAXWELL'S Victories of Wellington and the British Armies.** Frontispiece and 5 Portraits. *5s.*

**MENZEL'S History of Germany,** from the Earliest Period to 1842. 3 vols. *3s. 6d.* each.

**MICHAEL ANGELO AND RAPHAEL, their Lives and Works.** By Duppa and Quatremere de Quincy. With Portraits, and Engravings on Steel. *5s.*

**MICHELET'S Luther's Autobiography.** Trans. by William Hazlitt. With an Appendix (110 pages) of Notes. *3s. 6d.*

—— **History of the French Revolution** from its earliest indications to the flight of the King in 1791 *3s. 6d.*

Digitized by Google

**MIGNET'S History of the French Revolution**, from 1789 to 1814. 3*s.* 6*d.* New edition, reset.

**MILL (J. S.). Early Essays by John Stuart Mill.** Collected from various sources by J. W. M. Gibbs. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**MILLER (Professor). History Philosophically Illustrated**, from the Fall of the Roman Empire to the French Revolution. 4 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**MILTON'S Prose Works.** Edited by J. A. St. John. 5 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Poetical Works**, with a Memoir and Critical Remarks by James Montgomery, an Index to Paradise Lost, Todd's Verbal Index to all the Poems, and a Selection of Explanatory Notes by Henry G. Bohn. Illustrated with 120 Wood Engravings from Drawings by W. Harvey. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**MITFORD'S (Miss) Our Village** Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery. With 2 Engravings on Steel. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**MOLIÈRE'S Dramatic Works.** A new Translation in English Prose, by C. H. Wall. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**MONTAGU. The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.** Edited by her great-grandson, Lord Wharncliffe's Edition, and revised by W. Moy Thomas. New Edition, revised, with 5 Portraits. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

**MONTAIGNE'S Essays.** Cotton's Translation, revised by W. C. Hazlitt. New Edition. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**MONTESQUIEU'S Spirit of Laws.** New Edition, revised and corrected. By J. V. Pritchard, A.M. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**MORE'S Utopia.** Robinson's translation, with Roper's 'Life of Sir Thomas More,' and More's Letters to Margaret Roper and others. Edited, with Notes, by George Sampson. Introduction and Bibliography by A. Guthkelch. The text of the Utopia is given as an appendix. 5*s.*

**MORPHY'S Games of Chess.** Being the Matches and best Games played by the American Champion, with Explanatory and Analytical Notes by J. Löwenthal. 5*s.*

**MOTLEY (J. L.). The Rise of the Dutch Republic.** A History. By John Lothrop Motley. New Edition, with Biographical Introduction by Moncure D. Conway. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**MUDIE'S British Birds; or, History of the Feathered Tribes of the British Islands.** Revised by W. C. L. Martin. With 52 Figures of Birds and 7 Coloured Plates of Eggs. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

**NEANDER (Dr. A.) Life of Jesus Christ.** Translated by J. McClintock and C. Blumenthal. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles.** Translated by J. E. Ryland. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each. (Vol. I. out of print).

—— **Memorials of Christian Life in the Early and Middle Ages;** including Light in Dark Places. Trans. by J. E. Ryland. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**NIBELUNGEN LIED. The Lay of the Nibelungs**, metrically translated from the old German text by Alice Horton, and edited

Digitized by Google

by Edward Bell, M.A. To which is prefixed the Essay on the Nibelungen Lied by Thomas Carlyle. 5*s.*

**NICOLINI'S History of the Jesuits**: their Origin, Progress, Doctrines, and Designs. With 8 Portraits. 5*s.*

**NORTH (R.) Lives** of the Right Hon. Francis North, Baron Guilford, the Hon. Sir Dudley North, and the Hon. and Rev. Dr. John North. By the Hon. Roger North. Together with the Autobiography of the Author. Edited by Augustus Jessopp, D.D. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**NUGENT'S (Lord) Memorials of Hampden, his Party and Times.** With a Memoir of the Author, an Autograph Letter, and Portrait. 5*s.*

**OLD ENGLISH CHRONICLES**, including Ethelwerd's Chronicle, Asser's Life of Alfred, Geoffrey of Monmouth's British History, Gildas, Nennius, and the spurious chronicle of Richard of Cirencester. Edited by J. A. Giles, D.C.L. 5*s.*

**OMAN (J. C.) The Great Indian Epics**: the Stories of the RAMAYANA and the MAHABHARATA. By John Campbell Oman, Principal of Khalsa College, Amritsar. With Notes, Appendices, and Illustrations. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**OVID'S Works**, complete. Literally translated into Prose. 3 vols. 5*s.* each.

**PASCAL'S Thoughts.** Translated from the Text of M. Auguste Molinier by C. Kegan Paul. 3rd Edition. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**PAULI'S (Dr. R.) Life of Alfred the Great.** Translated from the German. To which is appended Alfred's ANGLO-SAXON VERSION OF OROSIUS. With a literal Translation interpaged, Notes, and an ANGLO-SAXON GRAMMAR and GLOSSARY, by B. Thorpe. 5*s.*

**PAUSANIAS' Description of Greece.** Newly translated by A. R. Shilleto, M.A. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

**PEARSON'S Exposition of the Creed.** Edited by E. Walford, M.A. 5*s.*

**PEPYS' Diary.** The only complete edition, containing the Rev. Mynors Bright's Transcription. Edited with Additions by Henry B. Wheatley, F.S.A. In 8 vols. With Portraits. 5*s.* each.

Vols. I.–VII. The Diary.
Vol. VIII. Full Index.

—— **Diary and Correspondence.** Deciphered by the Rev. J. Smith, M.A., from the original Shorthand MS. in the Pepysian Library. Edited by Lord Braybrooke. 4 vols. With 31 Engravings. 5*s.* each.

**PERCY'S Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.** With an Essay on Ancient Minstrels and a Glossary. Edited by J. V. Pritchard, A.M. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**PERSIUS.**—*See* JUVENAL.

**PETRARCH'S Sonnets, Triumphs, and other Poems.** Translated into English Verse by various Hands. With a Life of the Poet by Thomas Campbell. With Portrait and 15 Steel Engravings. 5*s.*

**PINDAR.** Translated into Prose by Dawson W. Turner. To which is added the Metrical Version by Abraham Moore. 5*s.*

**PLANCHÉ. History of British Costume**, from the Earliest Time to the Close of the Eighteenth Century. By J. R. Planché, Somerset Herald. With upwards of 400 Illustrations. 5*s.*

Digitized by Google

**PLATO'S Works.** Literally translated, with Introduction and Notes. 6 vols. 5*s.* each.

I.—The Apology of Socrates, Crito, Phædo, Gorgias, Protagoras, Phædrus, Theætetus, Euthyphron, Lysis. Translated by the Rev. H. Cary.

II.—The Republic, Timæus, and Critias. Translated by Henry Davis.

III.—Meno, Euthydemus, The Sophist, Statesman, Cratylus, Parmenides, and the Banquet. Translated by G. Burges.

IV.—Philebus, Charmides, Laches, Menexenus, Hippias, Ion, The Two Alcibiades, Theages, Rivals, Hipparchus, Minos, Clitopho, Epistles. Translated by G. Burges.

V.—The Laws. Translated by G. Burges.

VI.—The Doubtful Works. Translated by G. Burges.

—— **Summary and Analysis of the Dialogues.** With Analytical Index. By A. Day, LL.D. 5*s.*

**PLAUTUS'S Comedies.** Translated by H. T. Riley, M.A. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

**PLINY. The Letters of Pliny the Younger.** Melmoth's translation, revised by the Rev. F. C. T. Bosanquet, M.A. 5*s.*

**PLOTINUS, Select Works of.** Translated by Thomas Taylor. With an Introduction containing the substance of Porphyry's Plotinus. Edited by G. R. S. Mead, B.A., M.R.A.S. 5*s.*

**PLUTARCH'S Lives.** Translated by A. Stewart, M.A., and George Long, M.A. 4 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**PLUTARCH'S Morals.** Theosophical Essays. Translated by C. W. King, M.A. 5*s.*

—— **Morals.** Ethical Essays. Translated by the Rev. A. R. Shilleto, M.A. 5*s.*

**POETRY OF AMERICA.** Selections from One Hundred American Poets, from 1776 to 1876. By W. J. Linton. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**POLITICAL CYCLOPÆDIA.** A Dictionary of Political, Constitutional, Statistical, and Forensic Knowledge; forming a Work of Reference on subjects of Civil Administration, Political Economy, Finance, Commerce, Laws, and Social Relations. 4 vols. (1848.) 3*s.* 6*d.* each.
[*Vol. I. out of print.*

**POPE'S Poetical Works.** Edited, with copious Notes, by Robert Carruthers. With numerous Illustrations. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.
[*Vol. I. out of print.*

—— **Homer's Iliad.** Edited by the Rev. J. S. Watson, M.A. Illustrated by the entire Series of Flaxman's Designs. 5*s.*

—— **Homer's Odyssey,** with the Battle of Frogs and Mice, Hymns, &c., by other translators. Edited by the Rev. J. S. Watson, M.A. With the entire Series of Flaxman's Designs. 5*s.*

—— **Life,** including many of his Letters. By Robert Carruthers. With numerous Illustrations. Revised edition. 5*s.*

**POUSHKIN'S Prose Tales: The Captain's Daughter—Doubrovsky — The Queen of Spades — An Amateur Peasant Girl—The Shot —The Snow Storm—The Postmaster — The Coffin Maker — Kirdjali—The Egyptian Nights—Peter the Great's Negro.** Translated by T. Keane. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Digitized by Google

**PRESCOTT'S Conquest of Mexico.** Copyright edition, with the notes by John Foster Kirk, and an introduction by G. P. Winship. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Conquest of Peru.** Copyright edition, with the notes of John Foster Kirk. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella.** Copyright edition, with the notes of John Foster Kirk. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**PROPERTIUS.** Translated by Rev. P. J. F. Gantillon, M.A., and accompanied by Poetical Versions, from various sources. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**PROVERBS, Handbook of.** Containing an entire Republication of Ray's Collection of English Proverbs, with his additions from Foreign Languages and a complete Alphabetical Index; in which are introduced large additions as well of Proverbs as of Sayings, Sentences, Maxims, and Phrases, collected by H. G. Bohn. 5*s.*

**POTTERY AND PORCELAIN,** and other Objects of Vertu. Comprising an Illustrated Catalogue of the Bernal Collection of Works of Art, with the prices at which they were sold by auction, and names of the possessors. To which are added, an Introductory Lecture on Pottery and Porcelain, and an Engraved List of all the known Marks and Monograms. By Henry G. Bohn. With numerous Wood Engravings, 5*s.*; or with Coloured Illustrations, 10*s.* 6*d.*

**PROUT'S (Father) Reliques.** Collected and arranged by Rev. F. Mahony. Copyright edition. New issue, with 21 Etchings by D. Maclise, R.A. Nearly 600 pages. 5*s.*

**QUINTILIAN'S Institutes of Oratory,** or Education of an Orator. Translated by the Rev. J. S. Watson, M.A. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

**RACINE'S (Jean) Dramatic Works.** A metrical English version. By R. Bruce Boswell, M.A. Oxon. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**RANKE'S History of the Popes,** during the Last Four Centuries. Mrs. Foster's translation revised, with considerable additions, by G. R. Dennis, B.A. 3 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations,** 1494–1514. A Revised Translation by G. R. Dennis, B.A. With an Introduction by Edward Armstrong, M.A., Queen's College, Oxford. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **History of Servia and the Servian Revolution.** With an Account of the Insurrection in Bosnia. Translated by Mrs. Kerr. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**RECREATIONS in SHOOTING.** By 'Craven.' With 62 Engravings on Wood after Harvey, and 9 Engravings on Steel, chiefly after A. Cooper, R.A. 5*s.*

**RENNIE'S Insect Architecture.** Revised and enlarged by Rev. J. G. Wood, M.A. With 186 Woodcut Illustrations. 5*s.*

**REYNOLDS' (Sir J.) Literary Works.** Edited by H. W. Beechy. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**RICARDO on the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation.** Edited by E. C. K. Gonner, M.A. 5*s.*

**RICHTER (Jean Paul Friedrich). Levana,** a Treatise on Education: together with the Autobiography (a Fragment), and a short Prefatory Memoir. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Digitized by Google

**ROGER DE HOVEDEN'S Annals of English History**, comprising the History of England and of other Countries of Europe from A.D. 732 to A.D. 1201. Translated by H. T. Riley, M.A. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

**ROGER OF WENDOVER'S Flowers of History**, comprising the History of England from the Descent of the Saxons to A.D. 1235, formerly ascribed to Matthew Paris. Translated by J. A. Giles, D.C.L. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

[*Vol. II. out of print.*

**ROME in the NINETEENTH CENTURY.** Containing a complete Account of the Ruins of the Ancient City, the Remains of the Middle Ages, and the Monuments of Modern Times. By C. A. Eaton. With 34 Steel Engravings. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

—— *See* BURN.

**ROSCOE'S (W.) Life and Pontificate of Leo X.** Final edition, revised by Thomas Roscoe. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Life of Lorenzo de' Medici**, called 'the Magnificent.' With his poems, letters, &c 10th Edition, revised, with Memoir of Roscoe by his Son. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**RUSSIA. History of**, from the earliest Period, compiled from the most authentic sources by Walter K. Kelly. With Portraits. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**SALLUST, FLORUS, and VELLEIUS PATERCULUS.** Trans. by J. S. Watson, M.A 5*s.*

**SCHILLER'S Works.** Translated by various hands. 7 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each:—

I.—History of the Thirty Years' War.

II.—History of the Revolt in the Netherlands, the Trials of Counts Egmont and Horn, the Siege of Antwerp, and the Disturbances in France preceding the Reign of Henry IV.

III.—Don Carlos, Mary Stuart, Maid of Orleans, Bride of Messina, together with the Use of the Chorus in Tragedy (a short Essay).

These Dramas are all translated in metre.

IV.—Robbers (with Schiller's original Preface), Fiesco, Love and Intrigue, Demetrius, Ghost Seer, Sport of Divinity.

The Dramas in this volume are translated into Prose.

V.—Poems.

VI.—Essays, Æsthetical and Philosophical.

VII.—Wallenstein's Camp, Piccolomini and Death of Wallenstein, William Tell.

**SCHILLER and GOETHE.** Correspondence between, from A.D. 1794–1805. Translated by L. Dora Schmitz. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**SCHLEGEL'S (F.) Lectures on the Philosophy of Life and the Philosophy of Language.** Translated by the Rev. A. J. W. Morrison, M.A. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern.** Translated from the German. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Lectures on the Philosophy of History.** Translated by J. B. Robertson. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Lectures on Modern History**, together with the Lectures entitled Cæsar and Alexander, and The Beginning of our History. Translated by L. Purcell and R. H. Whitelock. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Digitized by Google

**SCHLEGEL'S Æsthetic and Miscellaneous Works.** Translated by E. J. Millington. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**SCHLEGEL'S (A. W.) Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature.** Translated by J. Black. Revised Edition, by the Rev. A. J. W. Morrison, M.A. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**SCHOPENHAUER on the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, and On the Will in Nature.** Translated by Madame Hillebrand. 5*s.*

—— **Essays.** Selected and Translated. With a Biographical Introduction and Sketch of his Philosophy, by E. Belfort Bax. 5*s.*

**SCHOUW'S Earth, Plants, and Man.** Translated by A. Henfrey. With coloured Map of the Geography of Plants. 5*s.*

**SCHUMANN (Robert).** His Life and Works, by August Reissmann. Translated by A. L. Alger. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**SCOTT (Sir Walter).** A Selection of the Finest Passages from his Writings. Edited, with Biographical and Critical Introduction, by Professor Grant. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**SENECA on Benefits.** Newly translated by A. Stewart, M.A. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Minor Essays and On Clemency.** Translated by A. Stewart, M.A. 5*s.*

**SHAKESPEARE DOCUMENTS.** Arranged by D. H. Lambert, B.A. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**SHAKESPEARE'S Dramatic Art.** The History and Character of Shakespeare's Plays. By Dr. Hermann Ulrici. Translated by L. Dora Schmitz. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**SHAKESPEARE (William).** A Literary Biography by Karl Elze, Ph.D., LL.D. Translated by L. Dora Schmitz. 5*s.*

**SHARPE (S.) The History of Egypt,** from the Earliest Times till the Conquest by the Arabs, A.D. 640. By Samuel Sharpe. 2 Maps and upwards of 400 Illustrative Woodcuts. 2 vols. Seventh edition. 5*s.* each.

**SHELLEY'S (P. B.) LETTERS.** Edited by Roger Ingpen. 2 vols. Illustrated. 5*s.* each.

**SHERIDAN'S Dramatic Works** Complete. With Life by G. G. S. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**SISMONDI'S History of the Literature of the South of Europe.** Translated by Thomas Roscoe. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**SMITH'S Synonyms and Antonyms, or Kindred Words and their Opposites.** Revised Edition. 5*s.*

—— **Synonyms Discriminated.** A Dictionary of Synonymous Words in the English Language, showing the Accurate signification of words of similar meaning. Edited by the Rev. H. Percy Smith, M.A. 6*s.*

**SMITH'S (Adam) The Wealth of Nations.** Edited by E. Belfort Bax. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **Theory of Moral Sentiments.** With a Memoir of the Author by Dugald Stewart. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**SMITH'S (Pye) Geology and Scripture.** 2nd Edition. 5*s.*

**SMOLLETT'S Adventures of Roderick Random.** With short Memoir and Bibliography, and Cruikshank's Illustrations. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Digitized by Google

**SMOLLETT'S Adventures of Peregrine Pickle.** With Bibliography and Cruikshank's Illustrations. 2 vols. *3s. 6d.* each.

—— **The Expedition of Humphry Clinker.** With Bibliography and Cruikshank's Illustrations. *3s. 6d.*

**SMYTH'S (Professor) Lectures on Modern History.** 2 vols. *3s. 6d.* each.

**SOCRATES (surnamed 'Scholasticus'). The Ecclesiastical History of** (A.D. 305–445). Translated from the Greek. *5s.*

**SOPHOCLES, The Tragedies of.** A New Prose Translation, with Memoir, Notes, &c., by E. P. Coleridge, M.A. *5s.*

**SOUTHEY'S Life of Nelson.** With Portraits, Plans, and upwards of 50 Engravings on Steel and Wood. *5s.*

—— **Life of Wesley,** and the Rise and Progress of Methodism. *5s.*

—— **Robert Southey.** The Story of his Life written in his Letters. Edited by John Dennis. *3s. 6d.*

**SOZOMEN'S Ecclesiastical History.** Translated from the Greek. Together with the ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF PHILOSTORGIUS, as epitomised by Photius. Translated by Rev. E. Walford, M.A. *5s.*

**SPINOZA'S Chief Works.** Translated, with Introduction, by R.H.M. Elwes. 2 vols. *5s.* each.

**STANLEY'S Classified Synopsis of the Principal Painters of the Dutch and Flemish Schools.** By George Stanley. *5s.*

**STAUNTON'S Chess-Player's Handbook.** *5s.*

**STAUNTON'S Chess Praxis.** A Supplement to the Chess-player's Handbook. *5s.*

—— **Chess-player's Companion.** Comprising a Treatise on Odds, Collection of Match Games, and a Selection of Original Problems. *5s.*

**STÖCKHARDT'S Experimental Chemistry.** Edited by C. W. Heaton, F.C.S. *5s.*

**STOWE (Mrs. H. B.) Uncle Tom's Cabin.** Illustrated. *3s. 6d.*

**STRABO'S Geography.** Translated by W. Falconer, M.A., and H. C. Hamilton. 3 vols. *5s.* each.

**STRICKLAND'S (Agnes) Lives of the Queens of England,** from the Norman Conquest. Revised Edition. With 6 Portraits. 6 vols. *5s.* each.

—— **Life of Mary Queen of Scots.** 2 vols. *5s.* each.

—— **Lives of the Tudor and Stuart Princesses.** With Portraits. *5s.*

**STUART and REVETT'S Antiquities of Athens,** and other Monuments of Greece. With 71 Plates engraved on Steel, and numerous Woodcut Capitals. *5s.*

**SUETONIUS' Lives of the Twelve Cæsars and Lives of the Grammarians.** Thomson's translation, revised by T. Forester. *5s.*

**SWIFT'S Prose Works.** Edited by Temple Scott. With a Biographical Introduction by the Right Hon. W. E. H. Lecky, M.P. With Portraits and Facsimiles. 12 vols. *5s.* each.

I.—A Tale of a Tub, The Battle of the Books, and other early works. Edited by Temple Scott. With a Biographical Introduction by W. E. H. Lecky.

Digitized by Google

SWIFT'S PROSE WORKS (*continued*).
II.—The Journal to Stella. Edited by Frederick Ryland, M.A. With 2 Portraits and Facsimile.
III. & IV.—Writings on Religion and the Church.
V.—Historical and Political Tracts (English).
VI.—The Drapier's Letters. With facsimiles of Wood's Coinage, &c.
VII.—Historical and Political Tracts (Irish).
VIII.—Gulliver's Travels. Edited by G. R. Dennis, B.A. With Portrait and Maps.
IX.—Contributions to Periodicals.
X.—Historical Writings.
XI.—Literary Essays.
XII.—Full Index and Bibliography, with Essays on the Portraits of Swift by Sir Frederick Falkiner, and on the Relations between Swift and Stella by the Rt. Rev. the Bishop of Ossory.

**SWIFT'S Poems.** Edited by W. Ernst Browning. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**TACITUS. The Works of.** Literally translated. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

**TASSO'S Jerusalem Delivered.** Translated into English Spenserian Verse by J. H. Wiffen. With 8 Engravings on Steel and 24 Woodcuts by Thurston. 5*s.*

**TAYLOR'S (Bishop Jeremy) Holy Living and Dying.** 3*s.* 6*d.*

**TEN BRINK.**—*See* BRINK.

**TERENCE and PHÆDRUS.** Literally translated by H. T. Riley, M.A. To which is added, Smart's Metrical Version of Phædrus. 5*s.*

**THACKERAY (William). A Selection** of the Finest Passages from his Writings. Edited, with Biographical and Critical Introduction, by G. K. Chesterton. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**THEOCRITUS, BION, MOSCHUS, and TYRTÆUS.** Literally translated by the Rev. J. Banks, M.A. To which are appended the Metrical Versions of Chapman. 5*s.*

**THEODORET and EVAGRIUS.** Histories of the Church from A.D. 332 to A.D. 427; and from A.D. 431 to A.D. 544. Translated. 5*s.*

**THIERRY'S History of the Conquest of England by the Normans.** Translated by William Hazlitt. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**THUCYDIDES. The Peloponnesian War.** Literally translated by the Rev. H. Dale. 2 vols 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

—— **An Analysis and Summary of.** By J. T. Wheeler. 5*s.*

**THUDICHUM (J. L. W.) A Treatise on Wines.** Illustrated. 5*s.*

**URE'S (Dr. A.) Cotton Manufacture of Great Britain.** Revised edition. Edited by P. L. Simmonds. 2 vols. 5*s.* each.

—— **Philosophy of Manufactures.** Revised edition. Edited by P. L. Simmonds. 7*s.* 6*d.*

**VARRO on FARMING.** (M. Terenti Varronis Rerum Rusticarum libri tres.) Translated, with Introduction, Commentary, and Excursus, by Lloyd Storr-Best, Litt.D., M.A., Lond. 5*s.*

**VASARI'S Lives of the most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects.** Translated by Mrs. J. Foster, with a Commentary by J. P. Richter, Ph.D. 6 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**VIRGIL.** A Literal Prose Translation by A. Hamilton Bryce, LL.D. With Portrait. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**VOLTAIRE'S Tales.** Translated by R. B. Boswell. Containing Bebouc, Memnon, Candide, L'Ingénu, and other Tales. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Digitized by Google

**WALTON'S Lives of Donne, Hooker, &c.** New Edition revised by A. H. Bullen, with a Memoir of Izaak Walton by Wm. Dowling. With numerous Illustrations. 5*s.*

**WELLINGTON, Life of.** By 'An Old Soldier.' From the materials of Maxwell. With Index and 18 Steel Engravings. 5*s.*

—— **Victories of.** *See* MAXWELL.

**WERNER'S Templars in Cyprus.** Translated by E. A. M. Lewis. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**WESTROPP (H. M.) A Handbook of Archæology, Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan, Roman.** Illustrated. 5*s.*

**WHEATLEY'S A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer.** 3*s.* 6*d.*

**WHITE'S Natural History of Selborne.** With Notes by Sir William Jardine. Edited by Edward Jesse. With 40 Portraits and coloured Plates. 5*s.*

**WIESELER'S Chronological Synopsis of the Four Gospels.** Translated by the Rev. Canon Venables. 2nd and Cheaper Edition. Revised. 3*s.* 6*d.*

**WILLIAM of MALMESBURY'S Chronicle of the Kings of England.** Translated by the Rev. J. Sharpe. Edited by J. A. Giles, D.C.L. 5*s.*

**XENOPHON'S Works.** Translated by the Rev. J. S. Watson, M.A., and the Rev. H. Dale. In 3 vols. 5*s.* each.

**YOUNG (Arthur). Travels in France during the years 1787, 1788, and 1789.** Edited by M. Betham Edwards. 3*s.* 6*d.*

—— **Tour in Ireland,** with General Observations on the state of the country during the years 1776–79. Edited by A. W. Hutton. With Complete Bibliography by J. P. Anderson, and Map. 2 vols. 3*s.* 6*d.* each.

**YULE-TIDE STORIES.** A Collection of Scandinavian and North-German Popular Tales and Traditions. Edited by B. Thorpe. 5*s.*

---

# BOHN'S LIBRARIES.

## A SPECIAL OFFER.

MESSRS. BELL have made arrangements to supply selections of 100 or 50 volumes from these famous Libraries, for £11 11*s.* or £6 6*s.* net respectively. The volumes may be selected without any restriction from the full List of the Libraries, now numbering nearly 750 volumes.

*WRITE FOR FULL PARTICULARS.*

Digitized by Google

# Bohn's Popular Library

**Foolscap 8vo. Each with designed Title-page and End-papers, strongly bound in Cloth, 1s. net.**

'They are admirably handy; the covers are thin and slightly flexible, but strong; the paper is thin, but not flimsy; and the type is clear. . . . Such works should speak for themselves: their quality is undeniable.'
*Athenæum.*

---

1. **Swift (Jonathan). Gulliver's Travels.** Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by G. R. DENNIS.
2–4. **Motley (J. L.). Rise of the Dutch Republic.** With Biographical Introduction by MONCURE D. CONWAY. 3 vols.
5–6. **Emerson (R. W.). Works.** Edited by GEORGE SAMPSON. Vol. I. Essays (1st and 2nd Series), and Representative Men. Vol. II.—English Traits, Nature, and Conduct of Life.
7–8. **Burton (Sir Richard). Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah.** Introduction by STANLEY LANE-POOLE. 2 vols.
9. **Lamb (Charles). Essays.** Including the Essays of Elia, Last Essays of Elia, and Eliana.
10. **Hooper (George). Waterloo: The Downfall of the First Napoleon.** New Edition, with Maps and Plans.
11. **Fielding (Henry). Joseph Andrews.**
12–13. **Cervantes. Don Quixote.** Motteux's Translation revised. With Lockhart's 'Life' and Notes. 2 vols.
14. **Calverley (C. S.). The Idylls of Theocritus,** with the **Eclogues of Virgil.** English Verse Translation by C. S. CALVERLEY. Introduction by R. Y. TYRRELL, Litt. D.
15. **Burney (Fanny). Evelina.** Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by ANNIE RAINE ELLIS.
16. **Coleridge (S. T.). Aids to Reflection,** and **The Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit.**
17–18. **Goethe. Poetry and Truth from my Own Life.** Revised Translation by F. STEELE SMITH. With an Introduction and Bibliography by KARL BREUL, Litt. D., Ph. D. 2 vols.
19. **Ebers (G.). An Egyptian Princess.** Translated by E. S. BUCHHEIM.
20. **Young (Arthur). Travels in France,** during the years 1787, 1788, and 1789. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by M. BETHAM EDWARDS.
21–22. **Burney (Fanny). The Early Diary of Frances Burney** (Madame d'Arblay), 1768–1778. New Edition. 2 vols.
23–25. **Carlyle. History of the French Revolution.** With Introdnction and Notes by J. HOLLAND ROSE, Litt. D. 3 vols.

Digitized by Google

BOHN'S POPULAR LIBRARY—*continued.*

26–27. **Emerson (R. W.). Works.** With the text edited by GEORGE SAMPSON. Vol. III. Society and Solitude, Letters and Social Aims, Addresses. Vol. IV. Miscellaneous Pieces.

28–29. **Fielding (Henry). Tom Jones.** 2 vols.

30. **Jameson (Mrs.). Shakespeare's Heroines.** Characteristics of Women: Moral, Political, and Historical.

31. **Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, The Thoughts of.** Translated by GEORGE LONG, M.A. With an Essay on Marcus Aurelius by MATTHEW ARNOLD.

32. **Mignet. History of the French Revolution,** from 1789 to 1814.

33–35. **Montaigne. Essays.** Cotton's Translation. Revised by W. C. HAZLITT. 3 vols.

36–38. **Ranke. History of the Popes.** Mrs. Foster's Translation. Revised by G. R. DENNIS. 3 vols.

39. **Trollope (Anthony). The Warden.** With an Introduction by FREDERIC HARRISON.

40. —— **Barchester Towers.**

41. —— **Dr. Thorne.**

42. —— **Framley Parsonage.**

43–44. —— **Small House at Allington.** 2 vols.

45–46. —— **The Last Chronicle of Barset.** 2 vols.

47. **Emerson (R. W.). Works.** Edited by GEORGE SAMPSON. Vol. V. Poems.

48–49. **Lane's Arabian Nights' Entertainments.** Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by STANLEY LANE-POOLE, M.A., Litt.D. Vols. I. and II.

50. **Plotinus, Select Works of.** Translated from the Greek.

51. **Five Essays by Lord Macaulay.** From the *Encyclopædia Britannica.* Edited by R. H. GRETTON, M.A.

52. **Hooper (G.). The Campaign of Sedan.** New Edition.

53. **Blake. Poetical Works.**

54. **Vaughan. Poetical Works.**

55. **Goethe. Faust.** Revised Edition.

56–57. **Trelawny. Adventures of a Younger Son.** 2 vols.

58. **Poushkin. Prose Tales.** The Captain's Daughter—Doubrovsky—The Queen of Spades—An Amateur Peasant Girl—The Shot—The Snowstorm—The Postmaster—The Coffin Maker—Kirdjali—The Egyptian Nights—Peter the Great's Negro. Translated by T. KEANE.

Digitized by Google

BOHN'S POPULAR LIBRARY—*continued.*

59–60. **Manzoni. The Betrothed.** 2 vols.

61–62. **Lane's Arabian Nights' Entertainments.** Edited, with Introduction, Notes and Appendices, by STANLEY LANE-POOLE, M.A., Litt.D. Vols. III. and IV.

63–64. **Plutarch's Lives.** With Notes and a Life. By A. STEWART, M.A., late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and GEORGE LONG, M.A. Vols. I. and II.

65. **Lucretius.** A Prose Translation. By H. A. J. MUNRO. Reprinted from the final (Fourth) Edition. With an Introduction by J. D. DUFF, M.A.

66. **Essays and Stories by Edgar Allan Poe.** Selected and Edited by HARDRESS O'GRADY.

67. **Selected Letters by Horace Walpole.** Arranged and Edited by ALICE D. GREENWOOD.

68. **Keats, The Poems of.** With a Memoir by the late Lord HOUGHTON.

69. **Cary's Dante.** The Vision of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise of Dante Alighieri. Translated by the Rev. H. F. CARY, M.A. New Edition by M. L. EGERTON-CASTLE. With Introduction, Chronological View of his Age, Additional Notes, and an Index of proper names.

70. **More's Utopia.** Robinson's Translation of the 'Utopia'; together with Roper's 'Life of Sir Thomas More' and More's Letters to Margaret Roper, and others. Edited with Notes by GEORGE SAMPSON, with an Introduction by A. GUTHKELCH, M.A.

71. **Schopenhauer's Essays.** Selected and Translated. With a Biographical Introduction and Sketch of his Philosophy, by E. BELFORT BAX, Author of 'Manual of the History of Philosophy.'

72. **Coleridge's Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare and other English Poets,** including Mr. Collier's Transcript of the Lectures of 1811 and the Bristol Lecturers of 1813, now first collected. By T. ASHE, B.A.

73. **Washington Irving's Bracebridge Hall; or, The Humorists.**

74. **Hawthorne's Transformation** (The Marble Faun).

75–76. **Smollet's Adventures of Roderick Random.** With Short Memoir and Bibliography. 2 vols.

77–78. **Fielding's Amelia.** Roscoe's Edition revised. 2 vols.

79. **Hauff's Tales.** The Caravan—The Sheik of Alexandria—The Inn in the Spessart. Translated from the German by S. MENDEL.

10. **Lessing's Laokoon, and the Representation of Death by the Ancients.** Translated by E. C. BEASLEY and HELEN ZIMMERN. Edited by EDWARD BELL, M.A., Trinity College, Cambridge.

Digitized by Google

# BELL'S HANDBOOKS
OF
# THE GREAT MASTERS
## IN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE.

EDITED BY G. C. WILLIAMSON, LITT.D.

NEW AND CHEAPER REISSUE.

Post 8vo. With 40 Illustrations and Photogravure Frontispiece. 3*s.* 6*d.* net each.

---

*The following Volumes have been issued:*

BOTTICELLI. By A. STREETER. 2nd Edition.
BRUNELLESCHI. By LEADER SCOTT.
CORREGGIO. By SELWYN BRINTON, M.A. 2nd Edition.
CARLO CRIVELLI. By G. MCNEIL RUSHFORTH, M.A. 2nd Edition.
DELLA ROBBIA. By the MARCHESA BURLAMACCHI. 2nd Edition.
ANDREA DEL SARTO. By H. GUINNESS. 2nd Edition.
DONATELLO. By HOPE REA. 2nd Edition.
FRANCIA. By GEORGE C. WILLIAMSON, Litt.D.
GAUDENZIO FERRARI. By ETHEL HALSEY.
GERARD DOU. By Dr. W. MARTIN. Translated by Clara Bell.
GIORGIONE. By HERBERT COOK, M.A. 2nd Edition.
GIOTTO. By F. MASON PERKINS. 2nd Edition.
FRANS HALS. By GERALD S. DAVIES, M.A.
LEONARDO DA VINCI. By EDWARD MCCURDY, M.A. 2nd Edition.
LUINI. By GEORGE C. WILLIAMSON, Litt.D. 3rd Edition.
MANTEGNA. By MAUD CRUTTWELL. 2nd Edition.
MEMLINC. By W. H. JAMES WEALE. 2nd Edition.
MICHEL ANGELO. By Lord RONALD SUTHERLAND GOWER, M.A., F.S.A. 2nd Edition.
PERUGINO. By G. C. WILLIAMSON, Litt.D. 2nd Edition.
PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. By W. G. WATERS, M.A.
PINTORICCHIO. By EVELYN MARCH PHILLIPPS.
RAPHAEL. By H. STRACHEY. 2nd Edition.
REMBRANDT. By MALCOLM BELL. 2nd Edition.
RUBENS. By HOPE REA.
SIGNORELLI. By MAUD CRUTTWELL. 2nd Edition.
SODOMA. By the CONTESSA LORENZO PRIULI-BON.
TINTORETTO. By J. B. STOUGHTON HOLBORN, M.A.
VAN DYCK. By LIONEL CUST, M.V.O., F.S.A.
VELASQUEZ. By R. A. M. STEVENSON. 5th Edition.
WATTEAU. By EDGCUMBE STALEY, B.A.
WILKIE. By Lord RONALD SUTHERLAND GOWER, M.A., F.S.A.

*Write for Illustrated Prospectus.*

Digitized by Google

New Editions, fcap. 8vo. 2s. 6d. each net.

# THE ALDINE EDITION

OF THE

# BRITISH POETS.

This excellent edition of the English classics, with their complete texts and scholarly introductions, are something very different from the cheap volumes of extracts which are just now so much too common.'—*St. James's Gazette.*

'An excellent series. Small, handy, and complete.'—*Saturday Review.*

---

**Blake.** Edited by W. M. Rossetti.

**Burns.** Edited by G. A. Aitken. 3 vols.

**Butler.** Edited by R. B. Johnson. 2 vols.

**Campbell.** Edited by His Son-in-law, the Rev. A. W. Hill. With Memoir by W. Allingham.

**Chatterton.** Edited by the Rev. W. W. Skeat, M.A. 2 vols.

**Chaucer.** Edited by Dr. R. Morris, with Memoir by Sir H. Nicolas. 6 vols.

**Churchill.** Edited by Jas. Hannay. 2 vols.

**Coleridge.** Edited by T. Ashe, B.A. 2 vols.

**Collins.** Edited by W. Moy Thomas.

**Cowper.** Edited by John Bruce, F.S.A. 3 vols.

**Dryden.** Edited by the Rev. R. Hooper, M.A. 5 vols.

**Goldsmith.** Revised Edition by Austin Dobson. With Portrait.

**Gray.** Edited by J. Bradshaw, LL.D.

**Herbert.** Edited by the Rev. A. B. Grosart.

**Herrick.** Edited by George Saintsbury. 2 vols.

**Keats.** Edited by the late Lord Houghton.

**Kirke White.** Edited, with a Memoir, by Sir H. Nicolas.

**Milton.** Edited by Dr. Bradshaw. 2 vols.

**Parnell.** Edited by G. A. Aitken.

**Pope.** Edited by G. R. Dennis. With Memoir by John Dennis. 3 vols.

**Prior.** Edited by R. B. Johnson. 2 vols.

**Raleigh and Wotton.** With Selections from the Writings of other COURTLY POETS from 1540 to 1650. Edited by Ven. Archdeacon Hannah, D.C.L.

**Rogers.** Edited by Edward Bell, M.A.

**Scott.** Edited by John Dennis. 5 vols.

**Shakespeare's Poems.** Edited by Rev. A. Dyce.

**Shelley.** Edited by H. Buxton Forman. 5 vols.

**Spenser.** Edited by J. Payne Collier. 5 vols.

**Surrey.** Edited by J. Yeowell.

**Swift.** Edited by the Rev. J. Mitford. 3 vols.

**Thomson.** Edited by the Rev. D. C. Tovey. 2 vols.

**Vaughan.** Sacred Poems and Pious Ejaculations. Edited by the Rev. H. Lyte.

**Wordsworth.** Edited by Prof. Dowden. 7 vols.

**Wyatt.** Edited by J. Yeowell.

**Young.** 2 vols. Edited by the Rev. J. Mitford.

Digitized by Google

# THE ALL-ENGLAND SERIES.

## HANDBOOKS OF ATHLETIC GAMES.

'The best instruction on games and sports by the best authorities, at the lowest prices.'—*Oxford Magazine.*

Small 8vo. cloth, Illustrated. Price 1s. each.

**Cricket.** By FRED C. HOLLAND.

**Cricket.** By the Hon. and Rev. E. LYTTELTON.

**Croquet.** By Lieut.-Col. the Hon. H. C. NEEDHAM.

**Lawn Tennis.** By H. W. W. WILBERFORCE. With a Chapter for Ladies, by MRS. HILLYARD.

**Tennis and Rackets and Fives.** By JULIAN MARSHALL, Major J. SPENS, and Rev. J. A. ARNAN TAIT.

**Golf.** By H. S. C. EVERARD. Double vol. 2s.

**Rowing and Sculling.** By GUY RIXON.

**Rowing and Sculling.** By W. B. WOODGATE.

**Sailing.** By E. F. KNIGHT, dbl. vol. 2s.

**Swimming.** By MARTIN and J. RAGSTER CORBETT.

**Canoeing.** By Dr. J. D. HAYWARD. Double vol. 2s.

**Mountaineering.** By Dr. CLAUDE WILSON. Double vol. 2s.

**Riding.** By W. A. KERR, V.C. Double vol. 2s.

**Ladies' Riding.** By W. A. KERR, V.C.

**Boxing.** By R. G. ALLANSON-WINN. With Prefatory Note by Bat Mullins.

**Fencing.** By H. A. COLMORE DUNN.

**Cycling.** By H. H. GRIFFIN, L.A.C., N.C.U., C.T.C. With a Chapter for Ladies, by Miss AGNES WOOD. Double vol. 2s. [New Edition.

**Wrestling.** By WALTER ARM-

**Broadsword and Singlestick.** By R. G. ALLANSON-WINN and C. PHILLIPPS-WOLLEY. [Double vol. 2s.

**Gymnastics.** By A. F. JENKIN.

**Gymnastic Competition and Display Exercises.** Compiled by F. GRAF.

**Indian Clubs.** By G. T. B. CORBETT and A. F. JENKIN.

**Dumb-bells.** By F. GRAF.

**Football — Rugby Game.** By HARRY VASSALL. Revised Edition (1909)

**Football—Association Game.** By C. W. ALCOCK. Revised Edition.

**Hockey.** By F. S. CRESWELL. New Edition.

**Skating.** By DOUGLAS ADAMS. With a Chapter for Ladies, by Miss L. CHENEVIX-TRENCH, and a Chapter on Speed Skating, by a Fen Skater. Dbl. vol. 2s.

**Baseball.** By NEWTON CRANE.

**Rounders, Fieldball, Bowls, Quoits, Curling, Skittles, &c.** By J. M. WALKER and C. C. MOTT.

**Dancing.** By EDWARD SCOTT. Double vol. 2s.

---

## THE CLUB SERIES OF CARD AND TABLE GAMES

'No well-regulated club or country house should be without this useful series of books.'—*Globe.* Small 8vo. cloth, Illustrated. Price 1s. each.

**Bridge.** By 'TEMPLAR.'

**Six-handed Bridge.** By HUBERT STUART. 6d.

**Whist.** By Dr. WM. POLE, F.R.S.

**Solo Whist.** By ROBERT F. GREEN.

**Billiards.** By Major-Gen. A. W. DRAYSON, F.R.A.S. With a Preface by W. J. Peall.

**Hints on Billiards.** By J. P. BUCHANAN. Double vol. 2s.

**Chess.** By ROBERT F. GREEN.

**The Two-Move Chess Problem.** By B. G. LAWS.

**Chess Openings.** By I. GUNSBERG.

**Draughts and Backgammon.** By 'BERKELEY.'

**Reversi and Go Bang.** By 'BERKELEY.'

**Dominoes and Solitaire.** By 'BERKELEY.'

**Bézique and Cribbage.** By 'BERKELEY.'

**Écarté and Euchre.** By 'BERKELEY.'

**Piquet and Rubicon Piquet.** By 'BERKELEY.'

**Skat.** By LOUIS DIEHL.

*** A Skat Scoring-book. 1s.

**Round Games, including Poker,** Napoleon, Loo, Vingt-et-un, &c. By BAXTER-WRAY.

**Parlour and Playground Games.** By Mrs. LAURENCE GOMME.

Digitized by Google

# BELL'S CATHEDRAL SERIES.

*Profusely Illustrated, cloth, crown 8vo* 1s. 6d. *net each.*

ENGLISH CATHEDRALS. An Itinerary and Description. Compiled by JAMES G. GILCHRIST, A.M., M.D. Revised and edited with an Introduction on Cathedral Architecture by the Rev. T. PERKINS, M.A., F.R.A.S. 2nd Edition, revised.

BANGOR. By P. B. IRONSIDE BAX.
BRISTOL. By H. J. L. J. MASSÉ, M.A. 2nd Edition.
CANTERBURY. By HARTLEY WITHERS. 6th Edition.
CARLISLE. By C. KING ELEY. 2nd Edition.
CHESTER. By CHARLES HIATT. 4th Edition.
CHICHESTER. By H. C. CORLETTE, A.R.I.B.A. 3rd Edition.
DURHAM. By J. E. BYGATE, A.R.C.A. 4th Edition.
ELY. By Rev. W. D. SWEETING, M.A. 4th Edition.
EXETER. By PERCY ADDLESHAW, B.A. 4th Edition.
GLASGOW. By P. MACGREGOR CHALMERS.
GLOUCESTER. By H. J. L. J. MASSÉ, M.A. 5th Edition.
HEREFORD. By A. HUGH FISHER, A.R.E. 2nd Edition, revised.
LICHFIELD. By A. B. CLIFTON. 3rd Edition, revised.
LINCOLN. By A. F. KENDRICK, B.A. 5th Edition.
LLANDAFF. By E. C. MORGAN WILLMOTT, A.R.I.B.A.
MANCHESTER. By Rev. T. PERKINS, M.A.
NORWICH. By C. H. B. QUENNELL. 2nd Edition, revised.
OXFORD. By Rev. PERCY DEARMER, M.A. 2nd Edition, revised.
PETERBOROUGH. By Rev. W. D. SWEETING. 4th Edition, revised.
RIPON. By CECIL HALLETT, B.A. 2nd Edition.
ROCHESTER. By G. H. PALMER, B.A. 2nd Edition, revised.
ST. ALBANS. By Rev. T. PERKINS, M.A.
ST. ASAPH. By P. B. IRONSIDE BAX.
ST. DAVID'S. By PHILIP ROBSON, A.R.I.B.A. 2nd Edition.
ST. PATRICK'S, DUBLIN. By Rev. J. H. BERNARD, M.A., D.D. 2nd Edition.
ST. PAUL'S. By Rev. ARTHUR DIMOCK, M.A 5th Edition, revised.
ST. SAVIOUR'S, SOUTHWARK. By GEORGE WORLEY.
SALISBURY. By GLEESON WHITE. 5th Edition, revised.
SOUTHWELL. By Rev. ARTHUR DIMOCK, M.A. 2nd Edition, revised.
WELLS. By Rev. PERCY DEARMER, M.A. 6th Edition.
WINCHESTER. By P. W. SERGEANT. 4th Edition, revised.
WORCESTER. By E. F. STRANGE. 3rd Edition.
YORK. By A. CLUTTON-BROCK, M.A. 6th Edition.

*Uniform with above Series. Now ready.* 1s. 6d. *net each.*

BATH ABBEY, MALMESBURY ABBEY, and BRADFORD-ON-AVON CHURCH. By the Rev. T. PERKINS, M.A.
BEVERLEY MINSTER. By CHARLES HIATT. 3rd Edition.
ST. MARY REDCLIFFE, BRISTOL. By H. J. L. J. MASSÉ. [*In preparation.*
THE CHURCHES OF COVENTRY. By FREDERICK W. WOODHOUSE.
MALVERN PRIORY. By the Rev. ANTHONY C. DEANE.
ROMSEY ABBEY. By the Rev. T. PERKINS, M.A.
ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S, SMITHFIELD. By GEORGE WORLEY. [2nd Edition.
ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, CANTERBURY. By the Rev. Canon C. F. ROUTLEDGE.
STRATFORD-ON-AVON CHURCH. By HAROLD BAKER. 2nd Edition.
THE TEMPLE CHURCH. By GEORGE WORLEY. 2nd Edition, revised.
TEWKESBURY ABBEY. By H. J. L. J. MASSÉ, M.A. 4th Edition.
WIMBORNE MINSTER and CHRISTCHURCH PRIORY. By the Rev. T. PERKINS, M.A. 2nd Edition.
WESTMINSTER ABBEY. By CHARLES HIATT. 4th Edition.

## BELL'S HANDBOOKS TO CONTINENTAL CHURCHES.

*Profusely Illustrated. Crown 8vo, cloth,* 2s. 6d. *net each.*

AMIENS. By the Rev. T. PERKINS, M.A.
BAYEUX. By the Rev. R. S. MYLNE.
CHARTRES: The Cathedral and Other Churches. By H. J. L. J. MASSÉ, M.A.
MONT ST. MICHEL. By H. J. L. J. MASSÉ, M.A.
PARIS (NOTRE-DAME). By CHARLES HIATT.
ROUEN: The Cathedral and Other Churches. By the Rev. T. PERKINS, M.A.

Digitized by Google

*An Encyclopædia in a Single Volume.*

# WEBSTER'S NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY

**2700 Quarto Pages.** **6000 Illustrations.**

OVER

## 442,000 DEFINED WORDS AND PHRASES

INCLUDING

**400,000** Main Vocabulary Definitions.
**30,000** Geographical and **12,000** Biographical Entries.

**SPECIAL FEATURES.**—Scholarly but Lucid Definitions—Complete History of the English Language—A Comprehensive Treatise on Orthography—An Exhaustive Guide to Pronunciation—Complete Pictorial Dictionary.

---

**The India Paper Edition.**—It is less than one-half the weight and thickness of the library edition. The paper used is of the finest quality, being thin, strong, and opaque, and giving remarkably clear impressions of type and illustrations.

COMPARATIVE WEIGHTS AND SIZES:

| **Library Edition.** | **India Paper Edition.** |
|---|---|
| Weight—15⅝ lbs. | Weight—6⅝ lbs. |
| Size—12⅜ × 9¾ × 5 ins. | Size—12¼ × 9⅛ × 2¼ ins. |

---

*Write for a Detailed Prospectus, containing Specimen Pages, and the opinions of eminent men upon the 'New International.'*

*DEFERRED PAYMENTS*
*can be arranged for any style of Binding.*

---

G. BELL & SONS, LTD., PORTUGAL STREET, LONDON, W.C.

S.10.8.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

A FINE IS INCURRED IF THIS BOOK IS NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW.

CANCELLED
AUG 14 1984
4588945

SEP 3 1984 H

WIDENER
BOOK DUE
JAN 1 0 1984
JAN 2 1982
7 351288

CANCELLED
MAY 1 9 1978
6109596

WIDENER
BOOK DUE
JUN 3 0 1984
JUN 2 1984
7233670

DEC 7 1981
24
7331885

Digitized by Google

3 2044 105 194 823

Digitized by Google